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Former Nottingham Forest and England U19 winger Appiah is one of two new arrivals at the Blue and Whites **P33**

Surge in theft and robbery with violence pushes crime rate up in Malaga province

Reported offences shot up by a quarter in the first nine months of 2022, latest data shows

There were almost 70,000 crimes committed between January and September last year in Malaga province, including the Costa del Sol. This was just over 14,000 more than the same period in

2021. All categories of crime showed an increase, however theft was up a significant 41.5% with 19,354 reported offences. Violent robbery, a much smaller category, had 1,346 reported crimes but this figure was still up just over 40% on figures from the previous year.

The interior ministry data, which combines information from National and Local Police and Guardia Civil, has also highlighted an ongoing rise in cyber-crime and offences linked to technology. **P4**



THE ARRIVAL OF THE KINGS

Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar bring sweets and gifts to round off the festive season **P6**

The Three Wise Men rode into town on camels to surprise children in a Malaga district on Wednesday.

FRANCIS SILVA

15 years since the unsolved disappearance of Amy Fitzpatrick in Mijas Costa **P8**

Andalusian food exports did well last year despite Brexit and inflation **P10**

Scottish guitarist hunts for former members of Spanish prison rock band **P18**

Digital divide reduced by half with faster internet to rural areas **P2-3**

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Wishes you a very Happy New Year

Digital divide has been reduced by half in Malaga province in the past year

The rapid expansion of broadband has meant that now only 6,000 homes in the province lack a high-speed internet connection

JAVIER LÓPEZ



MALAGA. Making a doctor's appointment, doing the weekly supermarket shop, reading the newspaper, looking at WhatsApp messages, examining personal profiles on social media... in just a few years an internet connection has become a basic necessity - and also an addictive one - that has changed all of our everyday lives; and so lacking access to this service has serious consequences.

Now, this "digital divide" between those who have access and those who don't is being closed at speed in Malaga province. The number of homes without internet access has dropped by half in the last year.

The figures come from the latest report drawn up by the Spanish government's ministry for telecommunications, which draws the map of digital connection, or rather lack of it, for the entire country. This data shows that the number of households in Malaga province without internet access has gone from 12,065 in 2021 to 6,147 at the end of last year.

These are the so-called 'white areas', in other words areas where there is no broadband internet connection and "no plans to install one by any operator within three years, based on credible investment plans," the report says.

Between no access whatsoever and the digital 'first world' are what are known as 'grey areas'. These are homes in areas where people can only opt for one operator to receive a service with a speed of less than 100 Mbps. The report shows that 9,210 homes in Malaga province are in this situation, but this is a drop of 60.8% compared with the 23,498 households affected a year ago.

If we combine the white and grey zones in Malaga, we can see that there are still 15,357 homes in the province with a deficient internet connection. That is still a significant number, even though it is a drop of 56.81% compared with the situation a year ago.

Another way of checking how the implantation of broadband in Malaga province is going is to look at the percentage of homes with no internet access in villages where

the percentages are lowest. This can be done by comparing the number of unconnected homes recorded by the secretary of state for telecommunications with the last official census of households, drawn up by the national statistics institute (INE) in 2011.

Much lower percentages

Comparing both parameters, at the end of 2021 the local municipality at the greatest disadvantage was Benaolán (in the Sierra de Ronda), where 97.9 per cent of households were without broadband. It was followed by Carratraca (94.5%), Montejaque (87.6%) and Istán (59.9%).

Now, those percentages have fallen by half. Almogía is the worst-connected municipality with 43 per cent of households without broadband, followed by Guaro (33.3%), Villanueva de la Concepción (28.1%) and Álora (21.4%).

What's more, in some villages broadband is now flourishing where before it was conspicuous by its absence. Benaolán is one of them now, where barely 1.35% of households lack high-speed internet.

Something similar has occurred in Carratraca, with just 1.85% of homes without broadband, and in Montejaque the percentage is just 0.1% of the homes in the heart of the village.

"In Malaga we are far ahead, the commitment is serious and the system is working well," said the head of the official Andalusian association of telecommunications engineers, Pedro Córdoba. He was referring to the New Generation Broadband Extension Programme (PEBA), which was set up by the government to take quality internet to all urban communities and, above all, homes in rural areas.

"The commitment was to install broadband to 38,000 homes in Malaga between 2022 and 2023, and 50% of that has been completed this year," Córdoba explained.

"These stimulus

programmes are a priority for technological development in rural environments. The technology in general, and access to internet in particular, is a determining factor in places' development. Nowadays if you have no connectivity, you're out of the game," he said.

He did, however, add a word of warning. "In Malaga the easiest part has been done. What comes now is more complicated," he said. And those complications are often due to the difficult terrain.

"The worst areas are a long way from the main roads, and if there are roads with no cables... all these are obstacles in the path for the operators. The further into the mountains a place is, the more difficult it is to connect because you cannot use micro-trenching or poles and so it is much more complicated," he explained.

In Malaga province quite a few bridges still remain to be crossed in order to close the digital divide completely.

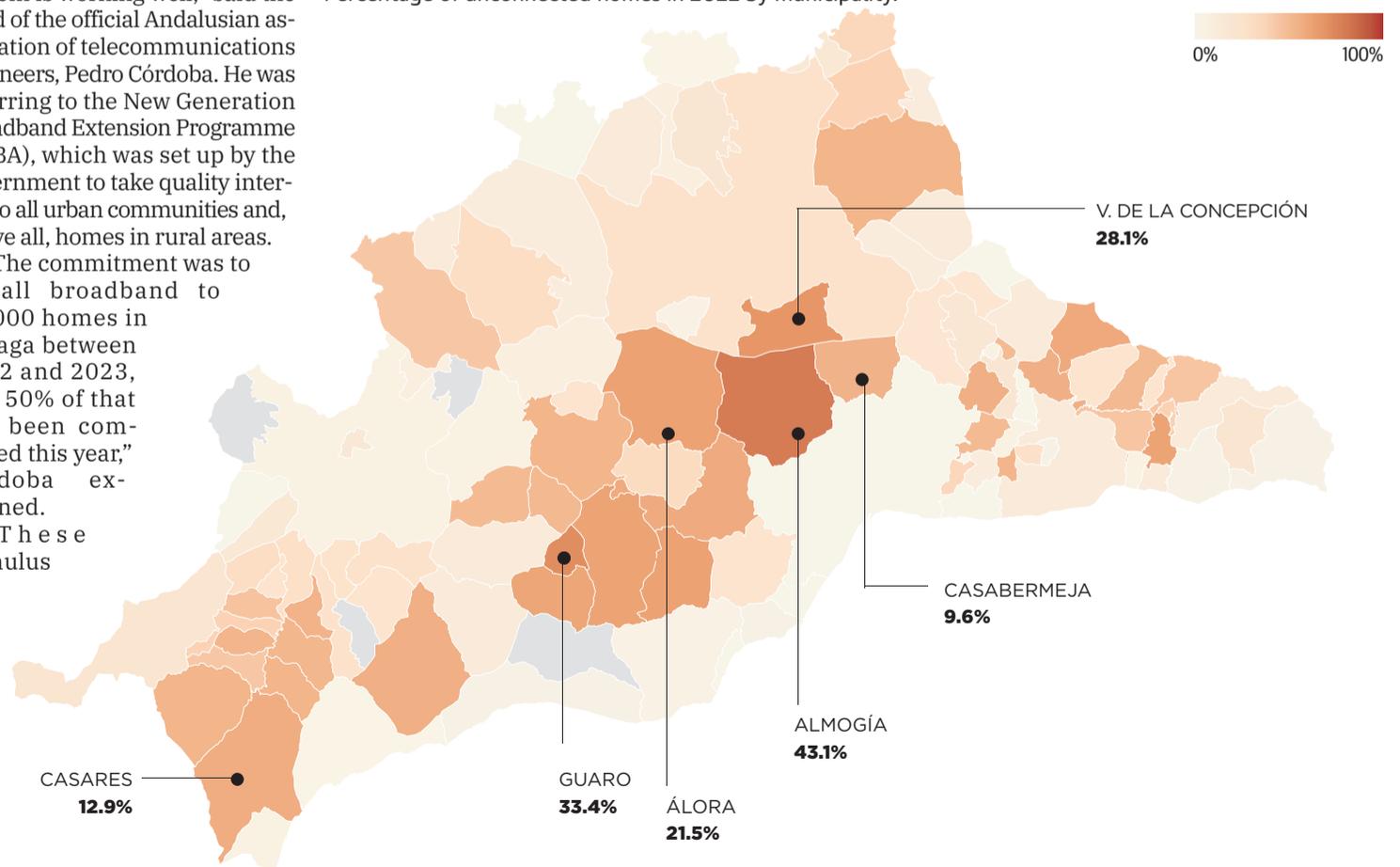
In Malaga province quite a few bridges still remain to be crossed in order to close the digital divide completely

THE 35 LOCAL PLACES WITH MOST UNCONNECTED HOMES

Municipality	% unconnected homes	Homes affected
1. Almogía	43.1	818
2. Guaro	33.4	379
3. Villanueva de La Concepción	28.1	376
4. Álora	21.5	1320
5. Alhaurín El Grande	20.9	2263
6. Coín	19.9	2079
7. Sayalonga	19.7	221
8. Monda	18.6	238
9. Alcaucín	16.7	253
10. Cártama	14.3	1601
11. Casares	12.9	477
12. Benahavís	12.3	479
13. Comares	11.5	100
14. Viñuela	11.5	158
15. Casabermeja	9.6	164
16. Faraján	9.2	21
17. Gaucín	8.6	107
18. Archidona	8.5	358
19. Genalguacil	8.5	39
20. Casarabonela	8.5	134
21. Macharaviaya	8.4	21
22. Algatocín	8.3	52
23. Jubrique	7.4	44
24. Sedella	5.5	33
25. Alozaina	5.2	75
26. Yunquera	4.6	98
27. El Borge	4.3	25
28. Benadalid	3.7	9
29. Arenas	3.6	33
30. Canillas de Albaida	3.6	29
31. Benarrabá	3.5	16
32. Cañete la Real	3.5	39
33. Árchez	3.2	14
34. Benalauría	3.1	10
35. Villanueva de Algaidas	3.1	66

Access to broadband in the province

Percentage of unconnected homes in 2022 by municipality.



Source: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation. INE

INFOGRAPHIC. A.M.C.

Local mountain village emerges from its internet black hole

Web. Residents in Benaoján, in the Serranía de Ronda, have gone from having barely any connection to high-speed fibre optic in almost every home

JAVIER LÓPEZ

How am I? Look at my face," said Víctor Hoces, pointing at his smile. A year ago his expression was very different, and so was the mood where he works on the first floor of the town hall in Benaoján, where people who needed to do something online would come in the hope that the internet was working. Now, that has all changed. Fibre optic internet has arrived in this small village in the Serranía de Ronda.

"At last we are first-class citizens, like people who live in towns," said this administrative assistant whose connection at home has also increased from a 10-Mbps ADSL to 1 GB. "It affects you in so many ways. Watching a film on a digital

platform, shopping online, carrying out transactions...I'm very happy now!" he added.

Like Hoces, other residents are also out of the internet "black hole" that Benaoján used to be, when 97.9% of homes had no fast connection. One year later, only 1.35% are in that situation.

Just over 12 months ago, a study showed that 944 homes in the village lacked a strong internet connection. Now there are, officially, only 13 without it, although local people believe the figure is more since 13 applies only to the village nucleus and fibre has not yet arrived at nearby Estación de Benaoján and other outlying areas.

In any case, the progress has revolutionised the lives of most lo-



Credit cards. José María Amaya can accept card payments at last. M.F.

cal residents. "Before, if my nephew wanted to play a game online we had to disconnect every other device in the house. Now we have three computers and four mobile phones connected at the same time and it's fine," said young biologist Juan González, who has just finished his master's degree in Biomedical Research and is looking for work.

"Having internet access is essential for the present and future of the village. Before, something as simple as joining an online class

meant I had to go to Ronda, because I couldn't even connect here. The change has been radical," he explained.

From a 600 to a Mercedes

"We used to be in a Seat 600 car and now we have a Mercedes," joked José María Amaya from behind the bar at El Tajillo. He has run the business for 32 years and has finally been able to install a credit card machine. "It's fantastic. Customers are using it a lot, here, and for our home delivery

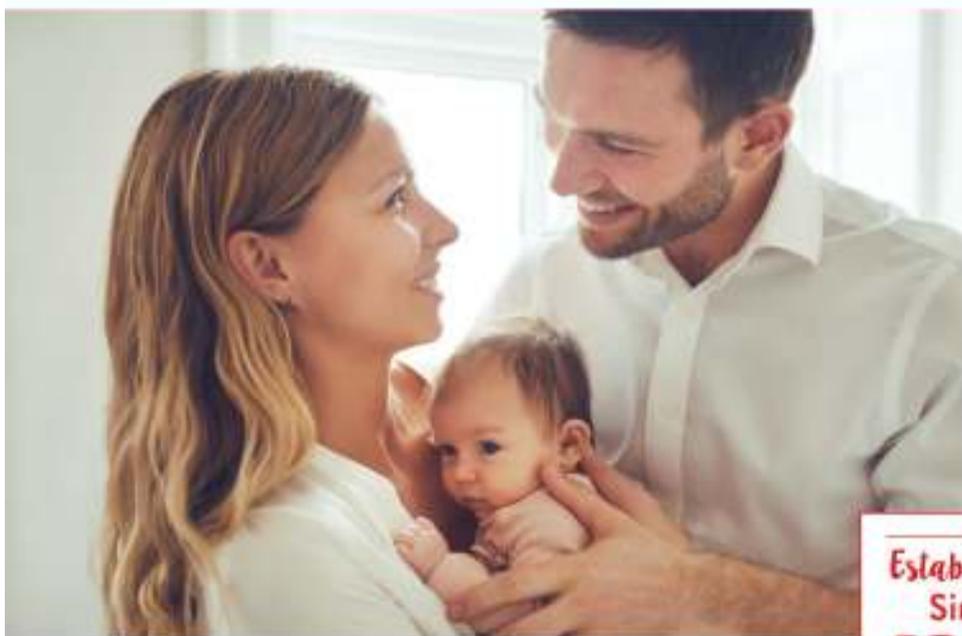


Cables. Víctor Hoces points to the fibre optic installations in the centre of the village. MIGUE FERNÁNDEZ

service," Amaya said.

Everyone is noticing the difference. "Before, uploading a document showing plans with text and images would take ages and the connection would often fail in the process. Now, in one click it is all done and that makes our work more effective," said David Gómez who also works at the town hall. Now, they are also paying less for a better service. "It's incredible," one of the men sitting in the square in the midday sun enthused. "The internet is so fast - you scarcely have time to blink before it is ready to go!"

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Crime rate in Malaga province soared 25% last year, with biggest rise in theft and violent robbery

The latest figures from the Spanish interior ministry show an increase in all types of crime in the first nine months of 2022

IRENE QUIRANTE

MALAGA. In the first nine months of 2022 the crime rate in Malaga province rose by 25.1% compared with the same period the year before. Figures just issued by the government's interior ministry show an increase in all types of crime, but the biggest rise was in thefts and violent robberies.

During those nine months there were 19,354 cases of theft in the province, which was an increase of 41.5%, and a 40.4% rise in robberies with violence and intimidation, bringing the total to 1,346.

In terms of robberies, although those involving violence and intimidation increased most in percentage terms, the most frequent were those in which violence was not used against persons but rather force was used instead to gain access to homes, shops and other premises; these totalled 3,369 cases. Among them, burglaries of private residences stand out, as these increased by 13.4% compared to the same period in 2021.

Increase in sexual offences

Other offences included 1,325 cases of stolen vehicles and 870 injuries and brawls (32.4% more than in 2021). Crimes against sexual freedom and integrity also went up by 24.8%, including 63 cases of sexual assault with penetration (compared with 38 in the same period of 2021), and the number of other sexual offences also rose by 20.8%.

The ministry report also shows that in the first nine months there were 15 crimes resulting in death in the province, two more than in the same period of the previous year. Most of them took place in Malaga city, with an increase in 2022 from three to nine. The others



The report used data from National Police, Guardia Civil, regional and local police forces. **SUR**

occurred in Marbella, Vélez-Málaga and Torremolinos.

Attempted murders

In addition, there were a further 45 cases of attempted murder (ten more than in 2021), in which the victims managed to escape with their lives from the violent attack against them.

The number of kidnappings remained the same in 2022 as in 2021, with seven being carried out between January and September last year: three in Marbella, two in Mijas, one in Vélez-Málaga and one in Torremolinos.

Cybercrime

The ministry report, which was compiled from information provided by the Guardia Civil and the National, regional and Local Police forces, makes a special reference

to the increase in cybercrime last year. In Andalucía this type of crime went up by 107.1% compared with 2019. The data for Malaga province, which is from 2021, shows that 7,756 people were cybercrime victims and there were 560 arrests.

Also in Andalucía, 898 people were the victims of bank card and travellers cheques fraud and another 5,339 fell for other types of scam committed via technology platforms. Of these, 539 were in Malaga province.

Children's access to technology also makes them vulnerable to cybercriminals, the report points out. In the first nine months of 2021, there were nine cases of corruption of minors and people with disabilities or functional diversity and 30 other crimes involving contact through technology with children under 16.

Police seized more than 90,000 kilos of drugs in 2022

I. Q.

MALAGA. The National Police and Guardia Civil seized over 90,000 kilos of drugs in Malaga province in 2022, and more than 4,000 people were detained for offences relating to drug trafficking.

Figures from the government representative's office in Malaga show that Guardia Civil officers found 40,000 kilos of the drugs and arrested 2,594 people, and their counterparts in the National Police discovered the other

IN NUMBERS

69,962

Crimes committed in the province between January and September 2022.

14,022

More criminal offences than in the same period of 2021.

19,354

Thefts in the first nine months, 41.5% more than in the same period of 2021.

3,369

Cases of robberies with force in private properties and commercial premises during the period.

50,000 kilos and arrested 1,484.

Javier Salas, the government representative in the province, said the amounts and the number of arrests were similar to those seized in 2021, and that hashish accounted for more than 95% of the drug hauls, followed by marijuana and cocaine.

Salas praised the "very important" work of both security forces and explained that the National Police's Drugs and Organised Crime Unit (Udyco) had broken up 60 criminal gangs, seized 2.65 million euros in cash and embargoed assets worth 41.6 million euros as a result of their operations. Salas also said the government is doing everything in its power to prevent organised crime becoming established on the Costa del Sol.

112 REPORTS

ARREST

Wanted French fugitive arrested in Marbella

EUROPA PRESS. Guardia Civil officers on the Costa del Sol have arrested a French national who had an international arrest warrant out for him issued by a Marseille court in 2019.

The 36-year-old was given a six-year prison sentence in his country for being part of a criminal or-

ganisation involved in drug trafficking and money laundering.

The fugitive had been arrested by the Portuguese authorities in September 2021, but escaped from a detention centre while his real identity was being verified as he was carrying false documentation.

After months of surveillance the Guardia Civil became suspicious of an individual travelling regularly between Portugal and Marbella. He was eventually arrested in a car park in Marbella last week.

ACCIDENT

Elderly woman injured in gas bottle explosion

Á. DE LOS RÍOS. An 81-year-old woman was injured in a butane gas cylinder explosion at a property in the inland Malaga village of Villanueva de Tapia on Monday. At 2.15pm the emergency services received a call to report an explosion at a house in Calle Archidona. The property suffered extensive damage as part of the ceiling collapsed. The woman was taken to hospital in Antequera.



The scene of the explosion. **CPB**

NEW YEAR

Man arrested after partner assaulted

E. CABEZAS. A 35-year-old man was arrested on New Year's Eve for allegedly assaulting his partner in Torre del Mar. Sources said that the couple began to argue as they walked in the town centre. Friends and family who were with them at the time were able to stop the man from continuing to hit the woman. The alleged aggressor fled the scene but was quickly located by Local Police who arrested him.



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Three Wise Men delight children on the most magical night of the year

Parades on 5 January take place in cities, towns and villages as the Reyes Magos bring their gifts to mark the end of the festive season

SUR

MALAGA. Children - and adults - across Spain will be waking up this Friday morning - 6 January - to find gifts left behind by the Reyes Magos, the Three Kings, after parading in colourful finery through the streets of cities, towns and villages.

The traditional parades, or 'cabalgatas', fill the streets on the evening of 5 January. The three stars are undoubtedly the Magi, Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar, who ride in colourful floats accompanied by dozens of helpers of all ages.

Sweets fly from the floats as they pass, followed by marching bands, dancers, cartoon characters and other entertainers.

This year the Malaga city parade is celebrating its 100th anniversary with a spectacular parade of 16 floats, setting off from near the city hall at 6pm.

Once of these, number 13, carries



The Kings and their entourages have been out and about this week greeting children. **FRANCIS SILVA**

100 children to mark the centenary.

The council reported that some 20.5 tonnes of sweets would be thrown into the crowds this year.

The parade traditionally ends with the Kings walking to the ca-

thedral gates where they make an offering to the baby Jesus.

Towns along the Costa del Sol also have elaborate parades on 5 January. Fuengirola's this year is one of the longest, with 25 floats in the streets between 5pm and

9.30pm. Mijas has three parades in Las Lagunas, La Cala and Mijas Pueblo; Marbella two, in the town centre and in San Pedro; and in Benalmádena the Kings tour Arroyo de la Miel and Benalmádena Pueblo.



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Malaga's Plaza de la Constitución on New Year's Eve. **FRANCIS SILVA**

Malaga city, one of the most popular New Year destinations

The council estimates that the average occupancy rate in the city's hotel rooms was 93% over the weekend

PILAR MARTÍNEZ

MALAGA. Malaga city has become one of the most popular places to spend New Year's Eve, and most hotels had high occupancy rates last weekend, more so than at the same time of year in 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic.

The Costa del Sol hotel association, Aehcos, said that between 23 and 26 December hotels in the city were 56% full on average, but that the figure rose to an average of 80% for New Year. Estimates from Malaga town hall, however, show an occupancy rate of 93% in local hotels last weekend.

The situation for Malaga prov-

ince as a whole was different, with Aehcos anticipating that the occupancy figures will be lower than in 2019 at an average of 52.1% in December. For the period 23 to 26 December, the association estimates an occupancy rate of 60.73% (two points lower than three years previously) and only 73% on average over the New Year weekend compared with 84.45% in 2019.

"Although in some months reservations have been higher than before the pandemic, there is still a way to go to get back to 2019 levels. Some hotels are closed or have few reservations at present, and there is concern in the sector because costs are rising so much," said Aehcos president José Luque.

Meanwhile, Aena, the airports authority, has said that between 20 December and 10 January a total of 6,676 flights were scheduled at Malaga Airport, 1% higher than the Christmas period in 2019/20.

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Explained: how to get the low-emission-zone stickers

From this year, towns over 50,000 will start to restrict the most polluting vehicles and eco-stickers for permitted cars can be bought at post offices

J. ROIG VALOR / N. HESKETH

MADRID / MALAGA. Spain's Climate Change Act sets the deadline of 2023 for municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants to implement their Low Emission Zones (ZBEs). This, in practice, means that 149 towns and cities will need to define an area of their urban centres where over-polluting ve-

hicles cannot enter. Places whose town centres are to be affected in Malaga province include Benalmadena, Estepona, Mijas, Fuengirola, Malaga city, Marbella, Torremolinos and Vélez-Málaga.

In preparation for the new rules, the DGT, Spain's traffic authority, developed four eco-stickers - B, C, Eco and 0 (zero) - which classify cars, vans and motorbikes according to their efficiency.

B (yellow) applies to petrol vehicles registered between 2001 and 2006 and diesel vehicles from 2006 to 2015. C (green) is the best internal combustion ones can aspire to. It applies to diesel vehicles registered after 2015 and petrol



Stickers must be displayed in the bottom right of the windscreen. P.F.

ones after 2006.

For those with an element of electric power, there are two stickers, Eco (two-tone green and blue), which covers conventional hybrid cars (HEV), plug-in cars with less than 40 km of zero-emission range and those powered by gas, either natural gas (CNG) or petroleum gas (LPG). Lastly, the 0 (blue) sticker is intended for 100% electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids with more

than 40 km and extended-range electric vehicles, which use a normal engine as a generator.

The rest of Spanish vehicles, the most polluting, which amount to about half, cannot have an eco-sticker and therefore will not be able to enter the zones.

Almost all affected municipalities in Spain have yet to implement their plans or publicly state what the controlled zone in their dens-

est areas will be, so it is likely to be a slow roll-out throughout 2023.

A sticker is not compulsory but towns using them as identifiers for their zones can limit access to vehicles that do not have them.

There are several ways to get an eco-sticker which costs five euros. The main routes are from Correos offices or repair garages affiliated to the Cetraa network and other authorised repairers. Paperwork from the car and personal ID need to be shown.

Vehicle owners can check which sticker applies to them on the DGT traffic authority website. Foreign cars cannot apply for a Spanish sticker and towns may ask these to preregister individually to enter, as has happened in Barcelona.

i DGT website:

<https://sede.dgt.gob.es/es/vehiculos/distintivo-ambiental/>

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15 years with no news of Amy, the Mijas teenager who disappeared

"It's not right that they're not still looking for her, she was only a girl. And she's my best friend," says Ashley, the last person to see her

JUAN CANO



A couple of kilometres uphill. It's a tarmac road apart from 50 metres of gravel, between Calypso and Riviera del Sol in Mijas Costa. Not many people use it but it was well-known to Amy Fitzpatrick, a 15-year-old Irish girl who had walked along there a thousand times between her home and that of her friend Ashley Rubio.

It should have taken her 20 minutes to get home, where she lived with her mother Audrey, her brother Dean and her stepfather, David Mahon, but she never arrived and nobody knows why. Last Sunday marked 15 years since one of the most mystifying disappearances ever to have occurred on the Costa del Sol.

Amy had spent New Year's Eve with Ashley, who was 13 at the time, at her home. "She wanted to stay with me while I looked after my brother. We were on the computer for a while, chatting to our friends on Messenger," Ashley says. Her mother, Deborah Rose, got home around 1.30am and found the two girls watching television. Everything was perfectly normal.

They went to bed about 3am, and got up late. "We got up and went out. I wanted to buy some clothes so we went to Fuengirola, but we had forgotten that it was New Year's Day and nothing was open, so we came back to El Zoco, in Calahonda. I was tired by then, so we went back to my house," Ashley says.

Deborah recalls Ashley asking if Amy could stay with them again that night. "I said it would be best if she went home and wished her family a Happy New Year," she says. Ashley walked with Amy to the entrance to her estate, where they said goodbye. "See you tomorrow," Ashley said.

It was 10pm on 1 January 2008, and the last time she ever saw her friend. Amy was carrying a Bershka bag containing a track suit

Ashley had lent her and a pink-coloured Irish mobile phone which she used to listen to music. "She had a Spanish phone but her stepfather broke it during a row a few days before," says Ashley, who is 28 now and a hairdresser like her mother.

The next morning a friend asked Ashley if she wanted to go out. "I rang Amy to tell her to come over, and her mother said she thought she was with me. She hadn't gone home the night before, which was really strange," she says.

She went out with her other friend, but was worried about Amy. She used to go round to Ashley's house every day, always about 3pm, so at 3.30 Ashley rang her mother to see if she had turned up, but she hadn't. She rang again at six o'clock and there had still been no sign of Amy. It was extremely unusual. "I remember saying to my mother that something wasn't right," she says.

Deborah rang Audrey and said her daughter was really worried about Amy. "I said that if she didn't ring the police, I would. She assured me that she was going to," she says.

That night, 2 January, Ashley went to Amy's house before going back to her own. Audrey said she had rung the Guardia Civil and they had said she would have to go in person and make a report. She also said Amy's stepfather had gone out looking for her.

No signs of violence

Amy Fitzpatrick's disappearance was considered worrying from the start because of her age, but that was the only reason. The Guardia Civil, who took charge of the investigation, did not find any sign whatsoever to indicate that a kidnapping or crime had taken place.

The officers carried out a detailed search of the path between the two girls' houses, centimetre by centimetre, and found no signs



Friends. Amy Fitzpatrick (left) and Ashley. **sur**



Broken family. Audrey with son Dean, who died in 2013, and her partner David Mahon, who was found guilty of his manslaughter. **sur**



Search. One of the photos published in the hope of finding Amy. **sur**

The initial hypothesis was that Amy had run away but over time her disappearance did not appear to be voluntary

of violence.

For the Guardia Civil the principle hypothesis, at least for the first few weeks, was that Amy had run away. Investigators had certain grounds to think this likely: she had gone missing voluntarily in the past, although only for a matter of hours, and it seemed that she did not have a good relationship with her stepfather.

In addition, Amy had had an argument with her mother because she had cancelled the trip to Ireland that they had planned on 26 December so she and her brother Dean could see their father, Christopher Fitzpatrick.

"I remember she came to my house crying, and said 'please, let me come in,' and went into Ashley's room," Deborah says.

To a teenager, Amy's apparent freedom was enviable. "I used to think, 'I wish my mother would let me stay out so late', but I see it differently now and I probably would have done a lot more for her. Amy

had a very sad life," Ashley says.

At one point the Guardia Civil issued an alert about a car, a white Ford Fiesta on British plates, which belonged to one of Amy's friends, a 34-year-old Irishman who used to fix her computer for her. Amy knew he used to leave the car unlocked and she used to get into it sometimes. The vehicle was stolen around the same time that she went missing, but this line of investigation, that Amy had run away, came to nothing. The lack of clues eventually tipped the balance towards her disappearance not being voluntary.

Two years later, Amy's mother and stepfather offered a reward of one million euros for the person who provided a clue that led to her whereabouts. In five days the phone number they gave received over 100 calls, although only four had any information.

In May 2013, five years after Amy went missing, another tragedy struck the family: Dean, her older brother, was stabbed to death. He was 23. Their stepfather, David Mahon, was arrested and later found guilty of manslaughter. He served a five-year jail sentence.

At his trial, Mahon said he and Dean had argued over a bottle. He told the court he had snatched a knife that Dean was carrying but

during the ensuing struggle Dean had stabbed himself with it, so his death had either been accidental or suicide.

Never given up

Audrey apparently accepted the explanation given by Mahon about what had happened and even married him two years later. Amy's mother has never given up searching for her daughter. She set up a Facebook page about her, and in February last year she celebrated Amy's 30th birthday.

In an interview with the Irish Mirror, Audrey revealed that she had received information from someone in Amy's circle who said she had allegedly got involved in a drugs transport deal with two men who said they would pay her 100 euros if she pretended to be the daughter of one of them.

Amy's father has set up a petition on Change.org, asking the Irish and Spanish authorities to resume the investigation, which has been at an impasse for 15 years.

Ashley is also critical of the lack of progress in both countries: "They haven't done anything for years. If Amy had been Spanish, or if she had gone missing in Ireland, they would all have done more. It's not right that they aren't still looking for her. She was a 15-year-old girl. And she is my best friend," she says.

Growth puts Benalmádena on verge of 'large population' status

Around 7,500 foreign residents are not included in the official figures because they have not registered, or re-registered, on the padrón

MARINA RIVAS

BENALMÁDENA. The population of the municipality of Benalmádena has risen from 70,204 in 2021 to 73,160 in 2022, according to the latest study based on the census (padrón) of Spanish municipalities. This is the second highest growth of the last decade.

In recent years, the increase has been more gradual, at a rate of



The town is close to being classed as a 'large population municipality'. SUR

about 1,000 inhabitants per year. The largest recent rise before this was from 2012 to 2013, when it went from 65,965 to 69,002.

"This increase in the census represents the highest population growth in Benalmádena in recent times and places us on the verge

of reaching the goal of 75,000, which would allow us to become a Municipio de Gran Población," the town's mayor, Víctor Navas, said.

This would make Benalmádena Malaga province's fifth town, apart from Malaga city, with this special "large population municipality" status, following behind Marbella, Mijas, Vélez-Málaga and Fuengirola.

Foreign residents

The town hall is also working on an initiative that could contribute to a more accurate figure of the population, explained local councillor Sergio Torralvo. He calculates that around 7,500 foreign residents are not reflected in the recent INE's figures because they had not registered, or re-registered, on the census.

He said that municipal officials have been visiting residents who have not yet updated their registration to inform them of their duty to carry out the procedure.

HERE AND THERE



Children at the opening. JOSELE

MARBELLA

Refurbished play area opens for children

ALBERTO FIZ. Marbella town hall has officially opened the remodelled children's playground in front of the Fernando Alcalá Marin library. It is a 500 square metre area full of games inspired by books, along with a fort, slides and climbing areas. The mayor, Ángeles Muñoz, said that another 150 metres will be added to the space in which games for children with mobility problems will be installed very soon.

MIJAS

Roundabouts named after local personalities

E.P. Mijas council has decided to name two roundabouts after local personalities: singer Juan de la Loma and the founder of the Mijas Golf complex, Mateo Pérez Robles. Mayor Josele González said, "Juan de la Loma is a much-loved figure in our municipality and a famous name in flamenco in Malaga and Andalucía." Mateo Pérez, originally from Granada, died in September 2020. He was responsible for several developments and golf courses in Mijas.

COÍN

New swimming pool put out to tender

ANDREA JIMÉNEZ. Coín will soon boast a new outdoor swimming pool which will be built at the José Burgos Quintana sports complex. It will measure 12.5 by 25 metres.

The town hall has put the construction of the new 500,000 euro pool out to tender and it will be designed for both competitive swimming and for the enjoyment of residents, according to the mayor, Francisco Santos. It will be subsidised by the Malaga provincial authority.

Footbridges over A-7 coast road between Estepona and Mijas to be repaired

JOAQUINA DUEÑAS

MARBELLA. The national government is to spend 2.2 million euros repairing 12 footbridges over the A-7 dual carriageway coastal road between Estepona and Mijas on the Costa del Sol.

Four of the structures that need attention are in Estepona, five on the east side of Marbella and the other three in Mijas. All are between kilometres 158.92 and 197.62 of the A-7 (on old road numbering).

The bridges are vulnerable to corrosion due to their location because of the salt in the air and the weather conditions on the coast, and defects have been detected through inspections.

Horizontal cracks

The damage includes rust and horizontal cracks, among others. The repairs will range from sanding and painting to completely replacing some sections of the concrete, and anti-corrosion materials will also be used to protect the bridges from further damage.

Movement

Expansion joints will also be added between the horizontal section of the bridges and the accesses, to permit movement caused by changes in temperature and deformation of the structure while providing as flat a surface as possible for pedestrians.



The mayor (second right) takes a trip on one of the new bus routes. SUR

Fuengirola launches bus app and free eco-service

TONY BRYANT

FUENGIROLA. Fuengirola town hall has launched a new mobile app and a website which offers information about the new, free

local bus service. The initiative was announced ahead of the launch of the "sustainable and ecological" service which came into operation on 1 January.

The mayor, Ana Mula, said the

app is "simple, clear and easy to use" and offers the user the ability to locate nearby bus stops, check timetables, services and possible delays, along with interactive maps and information on connections with other local services.

The app can be downloaded from Google Play or Apple Store with the name Fuengirola Transporte Urbano.

Free travel card

The new bus service, an initiative aimed at encouraging people to use public transport to reduce the carbon footprint, includes five routes, with frequencies ranging from every 15 minutes to half an hour.

Mula explained that, in order to encourage local residents to make use of the service, no card or ticket will be necessary for the first few months, although a free travel card will be introduced later in the year.



Agricultural exports from Andalucía did well last year despite inflation and Brexit

The volume of produce shipped from the region to outside of Spain dropped by three per cent but income rose by 16 per cent

HÉCTOR BARBOTTA



SEVILLE. The Junta regional government's latest report on agricultural exports from Andalucía shows that producers are receiving better prices for their goods. Although the volume of exports dropped by 2.9% in 2022, income increased by 16% compared with the previous year.

The report refers to the first 10 months of last year and it reveals that goods shipped internationally from Andalucía during that time were worth 11.76 billion euros. The volume of exported products dropped to 6.4 million tonnes.

Almería is still the leading province in this sector, with exports worth just over three billion euros, an increase of 15.7% compared with the period from January to October 2021.

Next was Seville at 2.94 billion euros (up by 27.4%) and then Huelva at slightly over 1.49 billion, which was 8.9% higher.

Malaga ended October with around 1.19 billion euros (5.8% more), Cordoba with nearly 1.07 billion (up by 23.3%), Granada with nearly 799 million euros (an increase of 7.3%), Cadiz with nearly 793 million (4.5% more) and Jaén with 376 million, which was an increase of 31.1%.

The regional government's minister for agriculture, Carmen Crespo, said the figures were very positive despite the impact of inflation and Britain's withdrawal from the European Union.

Experts say two main factors which have produced this new



Virgin olive oil leads agro-food exports from the region. SALVADOR SALAS

Agro-food exports from Andalucía

Figures for January to October 2022. Data in billions of euros.

Province	Exports	Change
Almería	3.09	16%
Seville	2.94	27%
Huelva	1.49	9%
Malaga	1.19	6%
Cordoba	1.07	23%
Granada	0.79	7%
Cadiz	0.79	5%
Jaén	0.37	31%

Source: Junta de Andalucía

GROWTH

16%

is the amount that exports of agro-food produce from Andalucía rose by in euro terms in the first 10 months of 2022

scenario of lower exports and higher income are the inflationary spiral, caused mainly by the war in Ukraine and the rise in fuel and energy prices, and Brexit. The first increased the value of the exports but reduced the volume of goods exported, and the second factor resulted in a reduction in both.

The British market for Andalucía's agricultural products dropped by 17.1% in volume terms and 1.6% in value terms, although the British are still good customers when it comes to peppers (the vegetable most in demand in the UK), strawberries, cucumbers, raspberries and tomatoes.

Exports to EU and USA

In terms of agro-food exports from the region to EU countries, the volume to Germany dropped by 3.4% but income rose by 13.3%; France imported 9.2% less in terms of volume but paid 12.4% more; Italy bought 8% less but paid 20% more and the Portuguese paid 14.3% more for a 0.06% lower volume of products.

There has also been a new scenario in trade with the USA, as the dollar has appreciated against the euro, making Andalusian products more competitive in price.

The volume of agricultural exports to the USA rose by 5.6% and income increased by 31% between January and October last year.

Employment in Spain withstands effects of crisis with 471,000 jobs created in 2022

JOSÉ MARÍA CAMARERO

MADRID. Figures for 2022 show that Spain managed to withstand some of the economic effects of the crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, ending the year with 471,360 more people employed than 12 months earlier and a significant rise in employment from the summer onwards.

Nearly 20.3 million people were registered with the Social Security system as working at the end of the year, the highest number ever recorded.

This was also the first year of the labour reform negotiated between the government, business owners and unions, which the government attributes for the rise in the number of permanent work contracts signed (2.3 million more than at the end of 2021).

Under 2.9m unemployed

Unemployment figures also show a drop in 2022, ending the year with 2,837,653 people registered as looking for work. This is 268,252 fewer than 12 months previously, "in an international economic crisis which is still marked by uncertainty," the Ministry of Work and Social Economy noted.

Since February 2021, the worst month for jobs after the Covid-19 crisis, unemployment has dropped by nearly 1.2 million people.

In the case of December, the number of people registered as unemployed had dropped by 43,727. The total number of work contracts issued during the month was 1,189,917 of which 464,152 were permanent. In absolute terms, there were 290,368 more permanent contracts than in the same month in 2021.

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La Cañada
SHOPPING

Long days of work to achieve zero sacrifice of animals

Animal Domus. The staff at the Parque Zoosanitario which covers Fuengirola, Torremolinos and Mijas, work hard to find homes for all the abandoned animals they take in every year



Workers

Yeneva and Jennifer play with one of the dogs waiting to be adopted.

MARINA RIVAS

Felines

The cats in the centre have their own playroom and care facilities.

M. RIVAS



Rooms

The rooms for dogs waiting for adoption line a long corridor at the centre.

M. RIVAS



MARINA RIVAS



Animals always have been and always will be perfect companions in life. They show us their love every day, they are loyal to us through good times and bad and cheer us up when we need it. They are always there for us and all they ask in return is basic care and at least half the amount of affection that they show to us humans.

Even so, many people - and unfortunately in increasing numbers - are abandoning their pets, using some excuse to no longer look after their furry friend. These pets then face an uncertain future. Some roam the streets, others die from

lack of food or extreme temperatures, some are put to sleep, and some who are luckier end up in a place like the Parque Zoosanitario, which is run by a company called Animal Domus and covers the Torremolinos, Fuengirola and Mijas areas.

This centre cares for, protects and finds new homes for animals and in the three years it has been open not one has been sacrificed. This is a very significant achievement, and the staff hope that one day it will become the norm instead of being news.

"The law still endorses the sacrifice of animals, all the shel-

ters do it. We decided to work on the zero sacrifice policy (an initiative from the head of the centre, veterinary surgeon Javier Delgado) and aim for the best possible social wellbeing for the animals. We have achieved it, but it is very difficult," says Jennifer Haro, the manager.

At present just three people (apart from cleaning and maintenance staff) run the Parque Zoosanitario, which currently houses over 20 dogs, six cats and several domestic birds, all of different breeds, sizes and ages, that are waiting to be adopted. Jennifer

and her colleagues Yeneva Martínez and Lorraine Macías are three young women who love animals and spend every day of the week caring, cleaning, feeding, protecting and monitoring the health of the ones in their care.

And no, this is not an easy job to do because every day they ex-

Many animals are brought in by their owners who cannot or do not want to look after them any more

perience the reality of animals being abandoned and the arrival of new ones needing a home, most of them domestic pets.

"Most of our animals have been brought here by their owners for their own reasons, which I won't go in to here," says Jennifer, indignantly. "Some people love dogs when they are little puppies but then when they get bigger they don't want them any more. They say they are going to move somewhere else and they won't be able to have a dog there... a lot of people aren't being honest with us, but in the end our obligation is to take the animals in and look after them."

Numerous tasks

However, the work at the Parque Zoosanitario isn't the same as an animal refuge: its purpose is to try to find new homes for abandoned pets. Last year they successfully rehomed over 100 animals, but it involved a long process of publicity and looking for suitable candidates because the number of animals arriving at the centre keeps growing.

Not all the animals are brought in by their owners; the girls are also responsible for picking up strays or responding to information about animals which have been abandoned, and not only dogs and cats either: they have also taken in rabbits, horses, ferrets and even foxes. And something of which very few people are aware: they also remove the bodies of dead animals from the streets, at the request of the Local Police forces.

In the case of cats, some are brought in by their owners and others are found in the street. With the strays, because they are not domesticated, the girls have them neutered and then try to relocate them in cat colonies where they can lead a better life.

All this results in long working days, all in the hope that these animals can be found the home they deserve and which many people are not able to give them.

This is why Fuengirola council, one of the three which collaborate with the Parque Zoosanitario, has begun a campaign to encourage people to adopt a pet, to try and support the zero sacrifice initiative.

How will this work? If someone adopts an animal the council will pay the veterinary fees including the cost of the microchip, animal passport, neutering and the first anti-rabies vaccine, worming and flea treatments. This is an important support and could make a great deal of difference.

Animal Domus also posts details of those waiting for adoption on Facebook and Instagram and has also launched a volunteer programme, so that from Mondays to Saturdays animal lovers can come and take the dogs for a walk, which is something very important for them.

Every little helps, when the aim is to give an animal the best possible quality of life.

Nerja health centre project gets go ahead after 20-year wait

The contract will be put out to tender this year with a budget of 9.4 million euros and a 20-month completion period

EUGENIO CABEZAS

NERJA. This year marks the 20-year anniversary of the signing of an agreement between the Junta de Andalucía and Nerja town hall, in which both bodies undertook to co-finance a new health centre in the town to replace the existing one.

However, two decades later Nerja still has the same health centre, which was deemed too

small for the town when the agreement was signed.

The mayor of Nerja, José Alberto Armijo, announced on last Friday that the Andalusian Health Service (SAS) has issued a "favourable report" on the basic project and execution of the new health-centre facilities, with a tender budget of 9.4 million euros and a completion period of 20 months.

"We are very happy to know that the Junta de Andalucía has finally given the green light to this important project for Nerja," said the mayor in a statement.

According to the project plans, the new health centre will have a surface area of 4,520 square me-



The land where the new health centre will be built. **E. CABEZAS**

tres spread over two floors and a basement. It will have 26 standard consultation rooms, compared to the 16 in the current facilities located next to Avenida de Pescia.

It will also have five multipur-

pose rooms, five paediatric consulting rooms, minor surgery and dentistry rooms as well as spaces for health education, physiotherapy, electrotherapy radiology and a critical care and emergency department, among other services.

Mijas walking group raises 1,215 euros for new hospital bed for Age Concern

T. BRYANT

FUENGIROLA. The Mijas Walking Tours group has raised 1,215 euros for Age Concern Fuengirola during its November and December fundraising campaign.

The group, run by Alan Boardman, organised several historic tours of Mijas and a fun quiz to raise the money to help the charity buy a hospital bed that will be loaned out to clients to speed up their recovery at home.

The balance will be put towards other projects designed to enhance the lives of English-speaking residents in Fuengirola, Mijas and Benalmádena.

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One of the cocoa trees at the Algarrobo research centre. **E. CABEZAS**

Axarquía scientists produce first European cocoa crop

ALGARROBO

E. CABEZAS. A team of researchers in the Axarquía has harvested its first large crop of cocoa pods. The Institute of Subtropical and Mediterranean Horticulture (IHSM) 'La Mayora', located in the Axarquía town of Algarrobo; a joint

research institute involving the University of Malaga, has been successfully cultivating cocoa trees in greenhouses since 2019.

In the last few weeks they have harvested four different varieties of cocoa pods. In total, around 100 kilos of pods have been harvested, from which the seeds are ex-

tracted and used in a complex fermentation and cooking process to make chocolate.

The head of the subtropical fruit growing department at the experimental centre, Iñaki Hormaza, explained that the idea first came about during conversations with La Despensa de Palacio, the only chocolate factory left in Andalucía, located in the town of Estepa in Seville province. Its managers were also interested in producing cocoa to make gourmet chocolates.

Hormaza and his team are growing about 80 cocoa trees in two greenhouses; one heated and one unheated. What makes this first harvest particularly successful is the fact that it has been achieved not only in the heated greenhouse but also in the unheated one.

"This has been achieved thanks to laboratory technician Ruth Aranda manually pollinating the flowers," Hormaza explained. He went on to say that they have used pollinating insects in the greenhouse. "We are studying what they are, because we don't have the insects of the Amazon here."



A biker with one of the presents for the children. **SUR**

Wolfmen bikers deliver festive cheer to children

SUR IN ENGLISH

ALHAURÍN. Big-hearted bikers from the Wolfmen Spain group straddled their machines and delivered soft toys and other presents to a children's home in Alhaurín ahead of the arrival of the Three Kings.

Members from the Alhaurín el Grande club had collected gifts donated by the local community at various collection points in the town. After delivering the presents to delighted children, the club president, Bill Hill, thanked the generosity all those who helped make the event happen.

THE EURO ZONE
MARK NAYLER

Purely symbolic?



Pedro Sánchez is trying a second time to strip one of Francisco Franco's most sadistic goons of his medals, after a first attempt in 2018 encountered obstacles. This time, apparently, the de-honouring really is going ahead. But there's a problem: the retired police officer who stands to lose four medals (which led to a pension increase of 50% over the years) - Antonio González Pacheco, dubbed "Billy the Kid" because he liked to spin his pistol around in front of victims - is dead. He died of Covid-19 in May 2020, aged 73, with all his honours intact.

What's the point of taking away a dead man's decorations? It seems purely symbolic, verging on pointless - much like removing the last of Franco's name from streets and squares, a process that started with the first historical memory law in 2007. It also draws attention to the fact that three of Pacheco's four medals were awarded by post-Franco governments, thus raising the uncomfortable question of democratic Spain's relationship to the dictatorship. There wasn't as clean a break with the past during the 1970s as some politicians (Sánchez among them) would have you believe.

The point is that Pacheco was never prosecuted for the crimes against human rights he is said to have committed during the dictatorship - as, say, Nazis were tried in the Nuremberg Trials of 1945 or Argentinian generals were in 1985's Trial of the Juntas. That's the only action against gun-toting Billy that would have constituted justice, the

only thing that would have had more than symbolic significance. Posthumous demedalling is a political stunt, a case of far too little, much too late.

There's a great deal of force to that argument. It can also be applied to the government's retrospective outlawing of the Franco regime, one of the most questionable components of the updated and beefier historical memory law, passed last October.

But perhaps posthumous honour-stripping is better than nothing, especially when prosecution is no longer possible. Spain is finally condemning police officers who not only avoided legal reprisals after the dictatorship, but who were actively rewarded by subsequent governments (such condemnation would have much more significance, of course, if issued by the Popular Party - Partido Popular). Seeing Pacheco succeed in post-Franco Spain must have been grotesque for those who suffered at the hands of state-sponsored thugs; and although this measure hardly counts as retributive justice, it nevertheless challenges the Spanish state's long-held line, that Pacheco was a stand-up guy, a sort of national hero.

Cases like this show that symbolic acts are not necessarily devoid of significance. Pacheco can't be put on trial anymore, but the government's attempt to take his medals away has, if nothing else, shown that he was unworthy of receiving them in the first place. That's progress of a kind.

Campaign group calls for changes to post Brexit 90-day travel rule

Hundreds of Britons who spend part of the year on the Costa del Sol have had their travelling rights curtailed since the UK left the EU

JENNIE RHODES

MALAGA. A campaign group has been set up to help British people who used to spend a number of months living in Spain each year before Brexit and who have seen their travel and residency rights changed since the UK left the EU.

Before Brexit, those affected did this lawfully by registering according to EU rules or keeping stays in Spain less than 90 days at a time. But without any specific arrangements, people in this position have found themselves facing a restrictive limit of just 90 days in a rolling 180 day period. This rule applies to the entire 27-country Schengen zone, not just Spain.

The group, called 180 Days in Spain, is led by Andrew Hesselden, who is in his early 40s and divides his time between London and his home in Mallorca. Andrew also travels frequently throughout the EU for work and pleasure and explains that while he was an EU citizen, he "made extensive use of freedom of movement".

Hesselden decided to set up the group to help people in similar situations to him. "After watching the results of the referendum unfold in 2016 and realising the impact a bad Brexit could have, I joined many British emigrant groups online and waited to see what Brexit would mean for people living for part or all of the year across Europe.

Many of the organisations set up to advocate for Brits abroad seemed to have a bit of a blind spot for people like seasonal workers or part-year residents who had made a home in two or more countries, so, I decided these people needed to have a voice.

The group's 5,400 members in-



Robert Winchester. J. RHODES

clude seasonal workers, second home owners, retirees, freelancers, consultants, artists, business owners, students, remote workers and the list goes on.

Equal rights

They are asking Spanish politicians to make changes that will let them regain the right to spend time in the country in more or less the same way they could before Brexit. They are also asking for the same access for all British visitors to Spain as Spanish visitors to the UK enjoy.

"Spanish citizens can still visit the UK for up to six months at a time without any need for a visa. This means that Spanish people in the reverse situation are not affected by loss of freedom of movement in the UK in quite the same way," Hesselden pointed out.

Spain's tourism ministry has indicated that it might "be lobbying for change in Brussels"

Carlos Pérez-Lanzac, the president of the Andalusian association of tourist properties and apartments, told SUR in English that the limitations placed on Britons coming to Andalucía for extended periods of time is "a problem" that is causing "damage" to the regional economy.

Hesselden responded saying, "The tourism industry might begin to feel the impact of the 90/180 problem, because anyone who has a home in France, Italy or Greece or travels a lot on business might find they can't even visit Spain for a one-week holiday."

Spain's tourism ministry has indicated that it might "be lobbying for change in Brussels", adding that it is not in Spain's interest to have such strict rules now. However, Hesselden believes that there is a simpler way around the problem and argues that the two countries could sign a new bilateral agreement, or even grant a visa waiver specific to Spain.

Appeal to UK MP

Part-year resident in Nerja, Robert Winchester, who is the president of the town's international club, said he and his wife have been affected by the rule. He has also owned a property in Catalonia for over 30 years and before Brexit would travel "every six weeks or so" to Catalonia and also spend winter in Nerja.

"I have contacted my MP in the UK and tried to get hold of the British and Spanish embassies, but I've given up. I haven't had any answers," he told Sur in English, adding, "It's affecting everyone. In Nerja they need more tourists and lots of people who used to spend long periods of time here now can't."

The group works closely with similar campaign groups in France, Germany, Italy, Greece and Cyprus, all of which have similar aims. It has found that both Sweden and Portugal already "appear to have simple extension processes that British people can make use of", explained Hesselden.

Andalucía is on alert for wave of Covid infections from China

E.P.

SEVILLE. The president of the Junta de Andalucía, Juanma Moreno, has said that the Andalusian health service and epidemiological centres in the region are on "maximum alert" for a possible wave of Covid-19 infections now that China has opened its

borders and people are free to travel.

Spain was one of the first countries to take immediate action following the announcement from China, where cases of Covid are sky-high, and is insisting that anyone flying in from China must produce evidence of a negative test result or proof that they are

fully vaccinated against the virus. Chinese arrivals will also undergo a temperature check upon arrival.

Moreno said the Junta is "deeply worried" by the situation in China, where it appeared that the virus is completely out of control.

"There is concern about the way contagion is evolving in China and about the difficulty in being able to make a correct evaluation of the situation there due to the lack of information," Spain's health minister, Carolina Darias, said last Friday.



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BENALMÁDENA

Two charged by police over fireworks incident in Gibraltar

Teenagers, aged 18 and 17, were reported to be throwing fireworks at passers-by on the Glacis Estate and a dog that was being walked was injured

D. BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. Two teenagers were arrested on 30 December after a disturbing incident on the Glacis Estate when they were said to be throwing fireworks at passers-by.

The police control room received calls to report the matter at 10.30pm, with one caller saying a dog who was being walked in the area had been hit by one of the fireworks and was injured.

When officers arrived on the scene a large crowd had gathered, and members of the public indicated who one of the suspects was.

The 18-year-old was searched and found to have fireworks in his possession, and was arrested on suspicion of possession of a prohibited import.

Whilst the police were in the playground area, a second teenager, aged 17, was seen shouting aggressively at members of the public. He tried to run off to avoid being arrested, but was caught by officers. He had to be taken to hos-



Police were called at 10.30pm. RGP

pital after appearing to have an epileptic fit, but after being seen by doctors he was taken to the police station and arrested and charged with causing a disturbance and obstructing the police. Both teenagers were released on bail.

There have been many complaints on social media from people in Gibraltar, especially on the Glacis Estate, about problems with fireworks over Christmas and New Year, and calls for them to be banned.



Popular with cruise ships. SUR

Last year was a record year for inaugural visits by cruise ships

D.B. 2022 was a record year for inaugural visits to Gibraltar by cruise ships, with a total of 20, beating the previous record in 2016 when there were 19. Tourism minister Vijay Daryanani says the government has worked "at full throttle" to boost the sector, which has made a swift recovery in the past year.



Daniel D'Amato, MBE.



Rosa Suissa, OBE.

King's New Year Honours list includes two Gibraltarians

DEBBIE BARTLETT. Two Gibraltarians have been granted awards in the New Year Honours list: Rosemarie Suissa, manager of the Primary Care Centre, receives an OBE and Daniel D'Amato, Gibraltar's representative in Brussels, an MBE.

In a press release congratulating the two recipients, the government said Daniel D'Amato took over the Brussels office at a challenging time, not least because

of Brexit and its related difficulties, and has been working closely with them on the negotiations for Gibraltar's future relationship with the EU.

Gibraltar Awards

Four recipients of Gibraltar Awards, which are granted by the Governor on behalf of the Gibraltar Honours Board, were also announced: María del Lourdes Bocarisa for services to Girl Guiding; Stephen John Cumming for services to TV production and documentary filmmaking; Ahmed Ben Tahayekt for services to the Governor and Commander in Chief; and Edgar Antonio Triay for services to people with hearing disabilities.



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LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Paw patrol

Unfortunately, droppings on the street are a widespread issue in every town in the province of Malaga, no matter how hard mayors work to keep their municipality looking presentable. Some of the residents have no regard for their city, in the same way as vandals who ruin works of art. This problem is nothing new, in addition to chewing gum ruining the sidewalks. It is inconsiderate, particularly to elderly people and, even worse, to wheelchair users, who find it hard to dodge the droppings.

The root of the problem is very simple, as we are the cause. Police aren't able to keep track of every local who owns a dog. The mayor is not to blame either, unless (s)he acts the same way as these selfish citizens. The solution lies in education: raising responsible citizens. The emphasis must be put on younger generations.

PALOMA RAMBLA FORTES

Belén bonanza

I would like to congratulate Malaga city hall for its outstanding and huge nativity scene - or Belén as my family now know to call them. We discovered it on a trip into town along with a few others. A wonderful insight on Spanish tradition.

JACKIE RAWLINGS

Costa living crisis

For me the reduction of IVA of

4 per cent makes little difference. I have to drive the length of the Costa del Sol twice a week for personal reasons and the end of the 20 cents discount on petrol (SUR in English 31 December) has made a big dent in my finances again. Either extend the (free) train line please to Estepona Mr Sánchez or put down the cost of fuel again for 2023. Or how about making the toll road free for once? I see it has gone up again in January as well.

ALAN JUDD

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THE MUSIC MAKER
PETER EDGERTON
www.peteredgerton.comThe charge of the
light-fingered brigade

There are many and varied reasons a chap opens his utility bills with a sense of trepidation these days.

Where electricity is concerned, it's the knowledge that the final figure is seemingly randomly generated by a bloke pulling numbered balls out of a hat somewhere near Toledo. The telephone bill is also a law unto itself, though for quite different reasons. For the last six months, mine has included at least one mistake of some kind, often two and, occasionally, three.

This month's bill reached new heights. As always, the total cost was a bit higher than agreed in my contract. As always, I scrolled down to the 'extras' bit of the bill. As always, there were a couple of them that made sense and a couple that didn't. There was also a rather brilliantly titled 'Emotion' charge for eight euros. Wonderful, I thought, now they're charging us for our feelings as we chat. I phoned the company concerned.

"Good evening, madam. Look

here, it appears I've been charged for the depth of my despair this month at eight euros a pop. Might you be so kind as to explain?"

"Ah yes, sir. This is for videos you've been watching on your phone. Some of them aren't free."

"I don't watch videos on my phone. I'm not thirteen."

"Ah, yes, sir. It will have been something else you've clicked on, then."

"Like what?"

"Like anything. It should let you know you're being charged first, of course."

"Well, it didn't. I'd like a refund please."

"Ok."

"Eh? Waddyamean 'ok'? I might simply be lying and wangling a refund having gleefully watched somebody famous doing something idiotic in a jungle."

"No, no. We believe you. It happens a lot. Eight euros will be deducted from your next bill and we've disabled your emotion."

"Sorry? I thought only my ex-girlfriend was capable of that."

"No, I mean we've disabled your Emotion feature on the phone. You can't be charged for watching videos anymore."

"That's a relief. I thought some dancing Kardashian or other might be randomly unleashed upon me while I was texting a sales rep."

The gist of the conversation was genuinely thus. Basically, I was charged eight euros (plus IVA) for clicking on something that didn't inform me of the fact and when I complained, I was given a no-questions-asked refund and a begrudging apology.

Now then, imagine if I were somebody more interesting and had better things to do than inspect my bills with a magnifying glass, that money would have been successfully and unlawfully charged. Let's say the telephone company has ten million customers in Spain and ten per cent of them don't notice the unwanted extra.

That's a lot of euros for some communications bigwig somewhere.

IDÍGORAS

Someone else
who wants a
flat on the
seafront in
Malaga

If we could afford a flat in Malaga,
would we still be living in the East?



SUR in English

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IVÁN GELIBTER

IVA disappointment

The man who saved twenty cents per litre of petrol to fill up the tank of his Ferrari can't take advantage of this discount anymore, but at least bread and milk will cost him a little less thanks to the IVA reduction that has affected us all since the beginning of the year.

It may sound populist to talk about the man with the Ferrari, but we musn't forget that this summer - when the price of fuel was over two euros - individuals like him benefited as much (or more) from this measure as the lady who cleaned his luxury room for as many euros as could be counted on

one hand.

Nobody can argue that this government is the one that has activated the most measures in the whole of democratic history, although this statement is not a good one on its own. To have been paying the twenty cents is as much of a nonsense as the 200-euro cheque for vulnerable families is a success.

With the reduction of IVA on some products the same thing is happening.

These days, newspapers, radio and television are trying to find out if it has really been reduced, or if they are deceiving us and, above all, if the public are happy with it.

It is still too early to make a full as-

essment, but for the moment it seems clear that disappointment is spreading.

Wouldn't it have been better to leave the tax as it was and use that money to increase the amount of the cheques? Isn't society being told that the problem is taxes and not the way in which the large distribution chains take advantage of the situation?

The situation is not the same, but perhaps we should have been more ambitious and intervened on prices as we did the masks.

This would at least have taught a new lesson to the ultra-liberals who, for whatever reason, have retreated inside their cave. Do you hear the silence?

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Return of the bad boy of jailhouse rock band

A Scottish musician who, in 2020, returned to live in Spain almost 30 years after he was released from prison in the country, is attempting to reform a band he founded while in jail. Glasgow-born Allan McCarthy formed his band, Berlin 90, with some of his fellow inmates while he was serving a prison sentence for drug related offences at Sangonera prison in Murcia.

His band, labelled the “bad boys of rock”, made the Spanish headlines after a music teacher at the prison submitted a demo tape to a talent contest organised by the local radio station, Onda Regional, a competition to find suitable songs for a compilation recording titled A Year of Rock in Murcia 1991.

One of the songs, written by Allan “virtually on the spot”, was selected to be included on the double cassette, along with others by several relatively well-established bands of the region.

The prison authorities got behind the project and supported the band with a rehearsal space and instruments; while the other inmates became their audience, and their critics.

The band “didn’t hold out much hope”, but when they were selected, it caused ripples within the prison service, because they had to be granted a special day release to record the track in a local studio.

“It was funny, because the prison had really backed us because it gave the establishment credibility, and they believed it would demonstrate how they had rehabilitated these criminals. But, when we were asked to go to record the track, the authorities

Short-lived fame. After a radio presenter prompted a revival of his music, a Scottish guitarist seeks to restart a band he formed in a Spanish jail 30 years ago



▲ Allan and DJ Ángel Sopena meet at the radio studio for the first time in 30 years. **SUR**

TONY BRYANT



◀ Scottish rocker Allan McCarthy is back in Spain and looking to restart his musical career. **SUR**

“I ended up on the Costa del Sol for a few years and began mixing with people that were not from my walk of life ”

ing the child up, so that kept me out of mischief,” he explains.

He also forged a career in magazine publishing, working on publications like the Scotch Whisky Association and The Scottish Personal Health magazines, along with The UK Schools Directory, the official publication of the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, and The Beat Goes On, a magazine promoting police recruitment.

Return to Spain

Following his retirement, Allan returned to Spain legally - for he had been banned from entering the country for ten years after his release - to spend time with his girlfriend, and her family, who owned two businesses in Murcia.

On his return, Allan made contact with the DJ, Ángel Sopena, to ask for his help in locating his old band mates.

The DJ had continued to present his radio show, Música de Contrabando, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2021, and one of the bands he continuously played on his show, according to the proud Scot, was Berlin 90.

“At the time, Ángel was giving interviews about his radio programme because it had been running for 30 years. He said in every interview that one of the best memories he has from his career was the story of Berlin 90. This guy has met Bowie, The Stones and many other top names, but he said the one thing that sticks out is the prison band he was involved with at the beginning,” Allan declares.

Unfortunately, Allan was to learn that one of the old band members had died, one had returned to Madrid and had disappeared from the scene, and the drummer, who was French, had returned to France.

Allan says that if he cannot reform the original band, he intends to start a new version of Berlin 90, whose music is back on the radio thanks to Ángel Sopena.

He also says that he has been discussing the possibility of returning to the prison where he was incarcerated to do a concert for the inmates. However, one thing he says is certain is that his time as a rock and roll jailbird has long been left behind him.

were backed into a corner and could not refuse,” Allan explains to SUR in English, laughing as he remembers the incident.

The media attention that followed the album’s release resulted in the band being given permission to leave the prison again, this time for an interview with Onda Regional DJ Ángel Sopena: a few weeks after the interview, Allan and his band were released once again to perform a concert at a music venue in Murcia.

However, the Scotsman’s new-found rock stardom was relatively short-lived because he was transferred to the notorious Carabanchel prison in Madrid, and all contact with his fellow band mates came to a halt.

The 59-year-old Glaswegian’s six-year stint in a Spanish jail came after he had begun to mix in the wrong circles when first arriving in the country in 1984.

“After leaving university, I came over to Spain for a break and ended up staying on the Costa del Sol for a few years. I began mixing with people that were not from my walk of life, but I was young at the time. I came over just after my 21st birthday and was back in Glasgow just in time for my 30th,” Allan says.

Allan headed back to Scotland on his release from prison, where his life took another unusual turn.

“My sister had had a child that I had never met - my nephew. Unfortunately, she had a mental breakdown and I ended up bring-

Héctor Valdés, the surgeon who creates beauty with bodies and bronze

MARBELLA

The doctor and artist is displaying his bronze sculptures of yoga postures at the HC Hospital until 8 January

JOAQUINA DUEÑAS

Héctor Valdés is an artist and cosmetic surgeon with surgeries in Madrid and in Chile, and he also sees patients at the HC clinic in Marbella. Many celebrities have passed through his hands, although he is too discreet to mention names. His philosophy is to seek balance, something that he applies when he is shaping bodies in the same way as when he is shaping bronze. A collection of his bronze sculptures can be seen at the HC Marbella until 8 January.

Even as a child, Valdés was outstanding at manual skills but his mother had her own ideas for him. "She wanted her children to have a more formal career because artists are seen as having a more uncertain future,"

he explains. So she wanted one of her sons to study law and another medicine.

"I was the one who was to be the doctor," he says, smiling. He studied medicine, but admits that doctors need to be able to handle the profession because "when someone goes to the doctor, they are always worried about something. It's difficult for anyone to feel cheerful when they go to the doctor; they are always afraid or feeling ill," he says. Keen to do something relating to design, he decided to specialise in cosmetic surgery and did so in Brazil.

He always felt a need for art and became a collector but he still needed something more and five years ago he studied sculpture at La Palma School of Art in Madrid.

"I spend all the spare time I have doing this," he says. "I have been working with human bodies for 35 years and moving a piece of wire or iron, wood or stone, after having handled the delicate tissues that also have to be kept viable in humans, is something I have discovered that



Artist and surgeon Héctor Valdés. **SUR**

I can do with incredible ease," he explains.

The time came to prepare his first series of sculptures and he opted for asanas. "In my profession I dedicate myself to cosmetic surgery, which represents wellbeing, quality of life and the longevity we enjoy nowadays, so I linked this quality of life with yoga, a thousand-year-old technique which is focused on wellbeing," he says. In fact, many of his patients also practise this discipline in one of its forms.

Valdés has created a series of 16 asanas - different yoga postures - in bronze, and they are especially stylised because they do not follow the habitual proportions, "which makes them more ethereal," he says.

This was a spiritual choice for a doctor whose speciality is considered the most superficial. However, Valdés considers that the superficiality of cosmetic medicine has to do with excesses, which is why he does not hesitate to turn down requests for surgery from many people.

"I feel that is the right thing to do," he agrees. "Some people are highly influenced by what they see on social media, by Photoshop and by others who live in an unrealistically idealised world. The key to surgery which is done well is that it doesn't give itself away. Someone's beauty must appear to be their own," he says.

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THE STORY BEHIND A PLACE NAME

Torremolinos

Tales of towers and mills

The name of Torremolinos is linked to the splendour of its water mills and its vulnerability to attacks from the sea



ALBERTO GÓMEZ

The explanation may seem simple - 'torre' means tower and 'molinos' means mills - but a long history lies behind the name Torremolinos. The first time it was documented under that name was in 1748, on a map drawn up by politician Zenón de Somodevilla, Marqués de la Ensenada. The name came into being due to the large number of water mills at that time and the watchtower on the coast, but in fact the town has not always been called Torremolinos.

The first tangible evidence of human presence in this area dates back to the Neolithic pe-

riod, about 5,000 years BC. In his book about watchtowers, Torres Almenaras, the academic and researcher Juan Temboury has said that a neolithic people originally from Mesopotamia found the area of coast where Torremolinos now stands to be the perfect place to settle.

The caves to live in, the good climate, the abundance of water and tremendous opportunities for hunting and fishing made the area an exceptional destination thousands of years before the tourism boom. The dating is supported by numerous caves which have been found

and the remains of human skulls, bones, clay pots, axe heads and arrows which have been retrieved during excavations in the early 20th century. These caves, mostly caverns or natural galleries around the Punta de Torremolinos, an area now known as Castillo de Santa Clara, and at the Cuesta del Tajo hill, have revealed that the location met two basic necessities for the first settlers: there was shelter and water.

In his book on the history of Torremolinos, Carlos Blanco says that the most primitive settlers lived in huts on open ground and used the caves as occasional shelters and as burial sites. The water from the springs in the area



A view of modern-day Torremolinos. SUR

has been essential in the history of Torremolinos, and it was during the period when the Moors occupied the region that the first industry came into being: they made use of the water that flowed from its source in the mountains down to the sea and built around 20 mills, using stone and wood for the construction.

Juan José Palop provides detailed information about the mills in his book Los Molinos de Torremolinos, including their origin, splendour and later decline. One, the Molino de Inca, has been restored now and the remains of several others can still be seen in the area. Some historians suspect that under Moorish rule, Torremolinos was known as Molina, as it appears as such on a 1696 map by Giacoma Rossi.

Despite the excellent natural conditions and the milling industry, for centuries the area suffered a serious problem: it was especially vulnerable from the sea and was therefore the victim

of successive attacks by invaders and pirates. Due to this, around the year 1300 and during the Nasrid rule, a defensive tower was built at the end of what is now Calle San Miguel. In the ordinances of 1497 it was referred to as Torre de los Molinos, a first step towards the name the town would be known by in the future.

After the reconquest of the Kingdom of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs, and after they had taken Malaga, the province entered one of its biggest periods of economic and social transformation. The monarchs conceded ownership of the watchtower to Rodrigo de Pimentel, the fourth Count of Benavente, and it then became known as Torre de Pimentel or just Torre Pimentel.

At that time Torremolinos (then known as Molinos de la Torre) and Churriana were part of what is now Alhaurín de la Torre, although in 1502 the pre-

LANGUAGE FOOTNOTE

Torre	Tower
Molino	Mill
Documentado	Documented
Mapa	Map
Referencia	Reference
Pruebas	Evidence
Neolítico	Neolithic
Investigador	Researcher
Asentamiento	Settlement
Poblador	Settler
Manantial	Spring
Rescatado	Rescued
Arrancar	To start up
Construir	To build
Explicación	Explanation
Vínculo	Link
Cráneo	Skull

Bilingual crossword inside back page

sent municipality began to be governed by Malaga under the name Torres de Pimentel.

The first reference to Torremolinos as an urban centre on provincial maps was in 1748, as mentioned above, when the Marqués de la Ensenada marked it on his as 'T.Molinos'.

A census from 1769 shows that Torremolinos was part of Churriana for administrative purposes at that time and had a population of 106, nearly all of whom were linked to mills with names such as Inca, Moro, Malleo, Castillo, Torre, Bóveda, Nuevo, Cruz and Nogalera.

Torremolinos was an independent municipality from 1813 until 1924, when it went back to being part of Malaga. On 27 September 1988, after repeated demands from local residents and a long administrative battle, the Junta de Andalucía announced that it was, once again, a municipality in its own right.

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GARDENING

Miscanthus sinensis

Native to the lower, alpine regions of Japan, China, South Korea and Taiwan, *Miscanthus sinensis* is a clump forming, ornamental grass.

All the 150 varieties have graceful, arching foliage which forms a dramatic and elegant foil to other plants and shrubs. They are sun loving and can be used as a specimen plant, in cottage or prairie style plantings, in borders and containers. The taller varieties can be used to create an informal hedge or for screening.

The silky flower plumes appear from spring until early autumn and can be silver, beige or purplish-red. They all fade to silver as they age and turn soft and fluffy. The seed heads remain on the plants for months and provide good winter interest as well as food for birds. The leaves turn shades of red, orange and bronze when exposed to frost.



Miscanthus sinensis a red flowered variety. WIKIMEDIA

Although they need a position in full sun, they will survive some shade. Too much shade though and they may flop over. *Miscanthus sinensis* will tolerate some periods of drought once it is established but prefers a moist, well-drained soil.

It can be cut back to the ground in late winter, just before new shoots appear. Keeping the foliage throughout the coldest months will help to protect the crown of the plant.

It may self sow and is considered invasive in some US states.

Mulching around the base will help prevent seedlings from taking hold and there are some varieties that are sterile. The seed heads can also be removed before the seeds ripen to prevent unwanted seedlings. Besides the seeds, *Miscanthus* can be divided in the spring to create new plants but the divisions can be slow to get established.

Some species can grow up to 2.5 metres tall but there are dwarf species that only reach 80cm tall. The best purplish red varieties include 'Red Chief' and 'Bucle'.

PHOTOS

Calling all gardeners

We know many of our readers have lovely gardens or enjoy growing plants on their terraces or balconies, and some like to take photos of plants they see when they are out and about. Why not share them with others?

Email your photos to english@diariosur.es with a caption and a few words of explanation and you may get your photos published on this page. Alternatively, you can send them to us via Facebook ([surenglish](https://www.facebook.com/surenglish)) or Twitter ([@SUR_English](https://twitter.com/SUR_English)).

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◀ The Baqueira Beret ski resort is one of the biggest in the country. **SUR**

a linear 12km route with some steep gradients and elevation.

Románico route

One of the best kept secrets in the Catalan Pyrenees is the Románico route. This path allows visitors to discover the history of the valley through an exploration of its unique and beautiful architecture.

Culture

The 15 churches on this route are real gems, not just because of their construction, but also for the paintings, sculptures and wood carvings found inside the buildings. However, only five of them are considered true Aranesse Romance masterpieces. The five include Sant Miquèu de Vielha, Santa Maria d'Arties, Sant Andrèu de Salardú, Era Mair de Diu dera purificación de Bossòst and the Santa Eulàlia d'Unha.

Although many of these churches have been reconstructed, the rich cultural and historical heritage remains intact with detailed sculptural decoration and bell towers, the stamp which seals the Romance identity of this Pyrenean retreat.

Gastronomic destination

The unique Romance architectural legacy and breathtaking landscapes do not overshadow the region's third main attraction: The Aranesse cuisine. Known beyond the Catalan border, it uses traditional recipes to make mouthwatering dishes using local produce.

The most famous dish is the Aranesse stew, a filling and warming dish made of meat, vegetables and sometimes a handful of noodles. The stew is perfect for recuperating warmth after a day out in the subzero winter temperatures. The rich lamb and beef stews, trout, mushrooms, and flame grilled game dishes cannot be left off the list of the region's finest delicacies.

This small but stunning Pyrenean retreat acts like a magnet, attracting thousands of visitors every year, seducing them with breathtaking landscapes, cultural heritage, food and plenty of fun.

There is no doubt that visiting the Val d'Aran is a good choice at any time of year, but in winter, it has an extra special charm that cannot be replicated anywhere else.

Val d'Aran winter attractions: snow, culture and food

Pyrenees. Falling temperatures and the first flakes of snow mark the start of the season in the versatile Val d'Aran

M. AGUILERA

▶ An idyllic town in the Val d'Aran. **SUR**



▶ The Mare de Déu de Montgarri church. **SUR**



The Val d'Aran, located in the province of Lleida is a destination where subzero temperatures and snow slurries are embraced eagerly by snow sport and rural tourism enthusiasts.

The Baqueira Beret ski resort is one of the biggest resorts in the peninsula and probably one of the best due to its northerly location which means that snowfall is more abundant. Many consider it to be one of Spain's best winter resorts due to the variety of services, the abundance of lifts and the seemingly infinite ski slopes.

Located in Lleida, in the Catalan Pyrenees, the resort is perfect for skiers of all abilities, as well as freeride and snowboard aficionados, sledging, hikers and cross-

country skiers. It is also a great place for families thanks to its range of slopes which cater to all ability levels and its dedicated children's area.

Baqueira Beret is also famous for its lively 'après ski', the highly awaited moment at the end of the day when skiers abandon the slopes and kick off their boots to enjoy good food and evening entertainment.

The culinary offering, leisure and well-being facilities make it one of the most interesting winter resorts in Spain. It is without a doubt the best reward after an action-packed day of climbing, descending and slipping on the slopes.

A true paradise

Although Baqueira Beret's ski

slopes are the main attraction in the Val d'Aran, the region has lots more on offer. The Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici national park is the only national park in the Catalonia region. It is known for having more than 200 glacial lakes interspersed between its mountain peaks, some of which reach nearly 3,000 metres. a true paradise for hikers and nature lovers.

Walking routes

The best way to explore the Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici national park is by foot. There is plenty of choice for the keen explorer. This national park is packed with a variety of routes which cater to all tastes and abilities. There are easier routes which take only a few hours,

This small but stunning Pyrenean retreat acts like a magnet, attracting thousands of visitors each year

such as the Nutria path, but also more complex courses that can take a few days, such as the Carros de Foc route.

In the Val d'Aran area, there are some of the most famous routes. The circular Circo de Colomers route around the lakes is an easy path which all members of the family can enjoy.

For those who are more experienced, there is the Estany de La Restanca and Lac de Mar route,

A vintage festive shop window

Nerja. A Belgian pastry chef at a local bakery has put his collection of antique Christmas decorations in his shop window

ALEKK M. SAANDERS



Part of the festive window display. A. M. S.



Rudy, next to his Nativity scene. A. M. S.

It was in the 1930s that the first decorated glass Christmas ornaments, shaped like Santas or bells, started to appear on the market. Irish Waterford, Austrian Swarovski, French Baccarat, and Swedish Orrefors were pioneers of the crystal Christmas decorations that are difficult to find today.

One place that can take us back to those days, however, is the Dulce Casa cake shop in Nerja. The unusual vintage collection that takes over the shop window in the festive season belongs to Belgian pastry chef Rudy, who has been running the shop for the last three years. His collection represents, above all, his native Belgium.

With the prominent colours of red, white and green, the display contains a steam train, toy aeroplanes and carousels, rocking horses and other animals, shops and workshops. Some shelves inside the shop are decorated with trademark toys of the past, among the sweets. "Belgium is known for having two Santas! That's pretty rare compared to any other country. The two figures are known as Père Noël (Father Christmas) and Sinterklaas (Saint Nicholas)," Rudy told SUR in English.

"Belgians also have a tradition similar to Spain's 'Belén'. Many churches have a 'real' Nativity scene with live oxen, sheep and donkeys and regular performances by the local choir. In our cake shop there is a Nativity on a small scale," he added.

When adding to his collection, Rudy looks for items that remind him of the past. "My family, where I grew up, were not able to follow the tradition of a merry Christmas. So I started the tradition with the appearance of my son in my life, 17 years ago. I did my best to create a Christmas atmosphere in the house and let him enjoy this merry and really genuine holiday," Rudy said.

Rudy's collection started with Murano glass, ball ornaments. "I bought two during my first visit to Venice. Then, every time I go to Venice I buy these rather expensive balls. Here in Nerja, I have part of my entire collection. Before I only decorated my house, but this time most of the pieces moved here, to the cake shop. Best of all I like the Christmas figures depicting professionals. One of my favourites is a baker," Rudy explained.



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The best way to pack Christmas away for next year

SUR IN ENGLISH.

Christmas is a wonderful time of the year but who hasn't regretted, just a little bit, putting up all those sparkling strings of lights, the swags of greenery, delicate baubles and glass and that huge, luxurious tree? When it comes to packing it all away again, and

faced with a tangle of lights and a tree that refuses to fit back in its box, it's perhaps time to rethink the whole process.

Preparation

The key to make the whole laborious task easier is preparation.



Make sure you have plenty of packing materials for the delicate items, boxes (preferably stacking) to pack them in and tape to seal

boxes.

Stuffing everything into a carrier bag and throwing in the back of the cupboard gets the job done in half the time but you could end up with broken ornaments, tangled tinsel and a trussed tree, an absolute nightmare to sort out the following year.

Sort the ornaments into groups of colour or style. Wrap the fragile ones individually in bubble wrap or tissue and place in a box, use a cardboard divider to separate groups.

Writing the contents on the outside also makes it easier to identify what's what next year. Finally, tape the box shut.

The lights need to be untangled and it doesn't matter how careful you are trying to fold them by

hand, they are going to be a knotty mess by next year. Invest in a Christmas lights storage reel (a version of the sort of thing used for fishing line or hosepipe) which you can find online. This will keep them tangle-free and easier to put up again the next year.

The tree is usually the focal point for Christmas and although real fir trees look fantastic and smell gorgeous, unless you can get a rooted one to plant in the garden afterwards, it is a bit of a waste.

Artificial trees can look just like the real thing and, with care, will last year after year. However they are notoriously difficult to get back in the box they were purchased in. The solution is to buy a tree storage bag online; with a zip and handles, it couldn't be easier!



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Works from the cactus series are among those that can be seen in the exhibition *Dominio y Sueño* at the CAC until 5 March. MIGUE FERNÁNDEZ

Miquel Navarro at the CAC Malaga: 40 years of cities and sex

The artist from Valencia represents power through totem poles, phallic symbols and tall towers that dominate his towns and cities

REGINA SOTORRÍO



MALAGA. He confesses that more than once he has passed his sculpture *La Palera* on the seafront promenade in a taxi and has asked the driver what he thinks of the enormous structure that stands in the Huelin district. And, after receiving a reply, has commented “What a jerk the artist must have been!”

Miquel Navarro likes to be provocative. And he likes dirty jokes, too, he says. Which is something that, with a poetic and metaphysical touch, is clear from his art. The CAC Malaga is currently exhibiting a retrospective of works by this painter and sculptor from Valencia, in which two constant elements stand out: the city and sex, in the sense of being a driving force for creativity and transcendence.

The show is called *Dominio y Sueño*, a reference to the power and imagination that characterise his works. It includes nearly 40 pieces produced from 1984 to the present day and they occupy not only the walls but also, especially, the floor. His cities of aluminium, iron, zinc and terracotta can be seen until 5 March in the main room at the CAC, like a relief map



Miquel Navarro, with his installation *Ciudad 84-85*. MIGUE FERNÁNDEZ

of any large urban centre in the world. They all have imposing skyscrapers like totem poles among the small pieces spread out over the space.

You can distinguish asphyxiating areas of narrow streets in marginal districts and other areas of low, perfectly aligned, houses. There is a certain realism about them, but Miquel Navarro insists that his aim was not to be critical. His objective is “poetical and lyrical, metaphysical, symbolic and metaphoric,” he explains.

“I have never really believed in political art. A lot of colleagues from my time did it and were dedicated to it, but I’m not like that. I take on the whole history of art, from the caves to the avant-garde of the be-

ginning of the century. Those are the fountains I drink from,” says this artist who won the National Plastic Arts Prize in 1986.

It is a reflection of his own experience. Next year it will be 50 years since the first art-city was produced by a creator who still lives in the place he was born, Mislata, despite having had the opportunity to move to Chicago, New

“I take on the whole history of art, from the caves to the avant-garde at the beginning of the century,” he says

York or Paris. But, as he said, none of those places would have a bougainvillea with flowers all year round, like the one in the inner courtyard at his home. And from that town in Valencia, he has witnessed how his surroundings have been transformed.

“Life is a repository of experiences, of memory, of recollections. And towns are as well, we build our whole lives upon them,” said Fernando Francés, the curator of the exhibition, at the inauguration. Through the metropolis, Miquel Navarro talks of “each and every one of the social vicissitudes that we in the tribe have built from pre-history to the modern day,” he added.

Each town comprises dozens,

hundreds of pieces. “I don’t even know how many there are,” the artist admitted, standing in front of *Ciudad 84-85*. The zinc skyscrapers and wide avenues define the main area, surrounded by regular features in terracotta simulating the districts. This is a changing installation, set up differently in each room so it is always unique. The same applies to *Monumentos y Multitud* (2014), where small spiky figures gather around narrow structures of blue aluminium. The urban landscape is transformed in *Marjal* (2017-2018) into a rural and agricultural setting, while in *Ciudad Roja* (1994-1995) horizontality is imposed on verticality, the female womb, sources at the CAC have explained, opening the way for the phallic references in the tall buildings.

The phallic element is common in his work, in sculpture, painting and screen printing. For Navarro, warriors, towers and totem poles are symbols of power which he associates with masculinity. But they are not always linked to pleasure, sometimes they are presented as suffering or a battle, as in the series *Batallar Caminos*, *Batallar con Travesía*, *Batallar con Escarabajo*, *Batallar con Mosca* and *Grupo de Guerreros Rojo II* (1998), with scenes of warriors fighting with their members erect.

“Battling is an everyday thing. We all have a war we have lost with someone, or an enemy suddenly jumps in unexpectedly but we have to stand up to them and fight,” Navarro says.

In another set of screen prints and watercolours he portrays his desire and sexual drive through cacti reminiscent of vulvas or phaluses. And for him, this plant represents pain as well. “It’s something that hurts you because it has spikes and they are painful if you touch them,” he says. But there is something more, there is still hope: “It is also the metamorphosis of nature,” he concludes.

Symbols of art and culture on display in the Rara gallery in Villanueva del Rosario

Vanessa Morata, Isabel Rosado and Cyro García join forces in an exhibition with works and icons that are part of the collective memory

ANDREA JIMÉNEZ

VILLANUEVA DEL ROSARIO. The group exhibition brings together the ideas of Vanessa Morata, Isabel Rosado and Cyro García on questions that have to do with the art market and the economy. It includes recognisable works from pop culture interwoven with the ideas of the protagonists as social icons and reflections of the history of art. The exhibition 'Celebrity Culture' explores art and culture as what characterises a society.

Vanessa Morata uses well-known elements of consumer culture with many symbolic and iconographic elements as well as recognisable characters from the history of art, in the form of a collage. Her creations are interspersed with interior design elements, very recognisable furniture with well-known figures from pop culture, such as Pokémon.

The walls of Rara also host Isabel Rosado's images, cardboard

models that develop iconographic works from the history of art. The artist reinterprets classic paintings, including those of important artists such as Van Gogh. She offers simulated recreations of different environments to reflect on the work itself and the elements that characterise it.

The third artist in the exhibition is one of the creators and managers of Rara, Cyro García. In the hall, a large ceramic sculpture crowns the exhibition: it is a world map that gives a different touch to the usual interpretation. It is a representation of the contemporary world art market. García uses gold, copper and silver tones to reflect the investment in art in each country and its volume of sales, mixed with the "speculation" in this field.

His second creation is a series of paintings, based on the most quoted, auctioned and famous works in the history of art.

Rather than reflecting on their form or outline, the artist focuses on colour, on the elements that represent the most emotional part of them.

The exhibition, which can be visited until mid-January, closes the third year of Rara together with the creations of its two resi-



Works from Daniela Miazzo and Quan Zhou are also on display. SUR

The exhibition Celebrity Culture, brings to an end the third year of the Rara Residencia and art gallery

dents: Daniela Miazzo and Quan Zhou. Both have enjoyed several weeks at the house to focus on their respective projects. Miazzo's work has several very character-

istic themes. "I have an obsession with women and eyes," she explains. She works with watercolours, spray, oil and latex. "They are very different from each other, but I have achieved a harmonious end result."

Zhou, known as 'Gazpacho Agri dulce', has taken advantage of her residency in Rara to shape her fifth graphic novel, 'La agri dulce vita', referring to the nomadic life she has led in her recent travels around the world and which will be published next year.

EXHIBITIONS

Casa de las Tejerinas

ESTEPONA. Casa de Las Tejerinas, Plaza del Flores.

Tasza Lico & Luciano. Until 11 January. Agua-Water is the title of this exhibition which consists of 28 works, nine of which are oil paintings and 19 photographs.



Tasza & Luciano, Estepona

Casa de Art

BENAHAVÍS. Parque Botánico Resort and Country Club, Las Lomas de Guadalupe.

The gallery exhibits some of the works of the artists as well as a hammered copper wall relief by the late sculptor, Rudy Haynal.

Museo Ralli

MARBELLA. Urb Coral Beach, Río Verde.

A selection of European contemporary art as well as unique pieces from emerging Latin-American artists in the permanent exhibition entitled Arte Europea: Surrealismo de Giorgio de Chirico a Francis Bacon. Free entry.

Photography exhibition

MIJAS. Until 7 January. Casa Museo. To support the Fundación Cris Contra el Cáncer, the Casa Museo is holding an exhibition of photographs by Cristóbal Gambero and Juan Luis Vega entitled Esperanza (Hope).

Véronique Favrat

MIJAS. Until 7 January. Centro Cultural La Cala de Mijas.

An exhibition of prints entitled Despertar by Véronique Favrat.

Nan de la Rocha

MIJAS COSTA. Until 7 January. Casa de la Cultura de Las Lagunas.

Mexican artists Nana de la Rocha will be exhibiting paintings and sculptures.

Sala Alfajar

MALAGA. Until 31 January. C/Císter1.

Mar del Norte An exhibition by artist Ana Posada. www.alfajar.es

Piñazo

MALAGA. Until 8 January. La Casa

Amarilla, C/Santos 7.

The collective exhibition Piña returns for another year. Around a hundred artists are taking part in this initiative which is running simultaneously in Malaga and in Seville.

Museo Picasso Málaga

MALAGA. Museo Picasso Málaga, Calle San Agustín.

Collection. Dialogues with Picasso. Collection 2020-2023 is composed of 120 works by the artist. These include the cubist sculpture Glass of Absinthe (1914) and the painting Susanna and the Elders (1955).

Picasso Visto por Otero. Until 8 January, 2023. The exhibition, which has proved very popular, has been extended. It consists of material that reveals something of the everyday life of this famous artist while he lived in France.

Picasso / Chanel. The Thyssen art gallery in Madrid is loaning two paintings by Picasso to the museum. These are Los Segadores (1907) and Corrida de Toros (1934). www.museopicassomalaga.org.

Museo Picasso Casa Natal

MALAGA. Until 28 May 2023. Plaza de la Merced.

The Mallorcan artist Bernardí Roig will be exhibiting his works entitled El último rostro y la afonía del Minotauro. He is also exhibiting at the Museo Ruso and the Pompidou.



Contingencias, La Coracha Malaga.

Museo Ruso

MALAGA. Edificio Tabacalera, Avda Sor Teresa Prat.

Shadow Dancers. Until 28 May 2023.

The museum will be exhibiting an installation by Mallorcan artist Bernardí Roig which consists of four, bronze dancers suspended from the ceiling. The sculpture explores the influence Degas had on Picasso's work. Opposite the dancers is a large format painting called Cap Negro 2021, the frame of which conceals a recording of a clock ticking.

Sputnik, La Odisea del Soyuz 2. Until 5 June.

The truth and the tales about Soviet cosmonaut Ivan Istochnikov and his mysterious disappearance during the

space mission, which was reportedly covered up by the Russian authorities

For Sale! Until 5 June. The installation For Sale! is a reconstruction of a room in an abandoned house, left with sheets covering the furniture. It was created in the 1990s by Russian conceptual artists Ilya and Emilia Kabakov.

An English Look at Russian Art. Until 5 June. British business woman Jenny Green is loaning her collection of Russian art, which includes works by Aivazovsky and Kandinsky, to the Russian museum for this exhibition.

Ausentes. Until 5 June. Photographer José Manuel Ballester will be exhibiting an extensive collection of his works which reflects the absence of Russian art works in galleries in Malaga as a result of Russia's war with Ukraine.

Centre Pompidou

MALAGA. Muelle Uno.

<https://centrepompidou-malaga.eu/>
Yaacov Agam. Until 6 February 2023.

The artist invites children and families to an immersive experience to understand his works which are based on an orchestration of moving elements.

El laberinto de Luz y la Cabeza del Minotauro. Until 28 May 2023. The museum will be exhibiting an installation by Mallorcan artist Bernardí Roig which consists of 25 polystyrene blocks forming a labyrinth.

Centro de Arte Contemporáneo

MALAGA.

Eduardo Sarabia, Until 12 February. 'Tú eres otro yo' is Sarabia's first individual exhibition in a European gallery. It consists of a mural and thirty acrylic paintings by the artist.

Christian Boltanski. Until 29 January. Coeur is the title of this exhibition by French artist Christian Boltanski. The installation includes a flickering bulb accompanied by a recording of a beating heart.

Miquel Navarro. Until 5 March, 2023. The retrospective exhibition Dominio y Sueño covers forty years of the works of Miquel Navarro, one of the most influential sculptors in the 70s. His works combine architecture and sculpture.

MALAGA. CAC Málaga - La Coracha. **Contingencias de lo Tangible.** Until 8 January. Four artists from the Facultad de Bellas Artes of Malaga University will be exhibiting a selection of their work.

OXO Videogame museum

MALAGA. Opens on 27 January, Plaza del Siglo.

The museum, which features original models of video games and consoles, also has an attic restaurant, Terraza Catedral. Tickets:

www.oxomuseo.com/entradas

Bienal de Fotografía Africana Ozangé

MALAGA. Until 29 January. La Térmica and Centro Cultural La Malagueta.

The exhibition Ozangé in the Centro Cultural La Malagueta will have an exhibition of photographs by 36 African artists with contributions by Cristina de Middel (Spain), Nicola Lo

Calzo (Italy) and Elsa Bleda (Turkey/France). The exhibition in La Térmica, entitled Capturando la Evolución Cultural, pays tribute to the Lagos Photo Festival organised by the African Artists Association founded by Azu Nwagbogu.



Video game museum, Malaga

Museo Carmen Thyssen

MALAGA. C/ Compañía, 10. 10am - 8pm Tuesday to Sunday.

Arte Belga. Until 5 March. Del Impresionismo a Magritte. The exhibition includes works by Hippolyte Boulenger, Constantin Meunier, Jan Toorop, Théo Van Rysselberghe, Émile Claus, Anna Boch, James Ensor, Fernand Khnopff, Félicien Rops, Léon Spilliaert, Jos Albert, Jean Brusselmans, Gustave de Smet, René Magritte, Paul Delvaux and others.

www.carmenthysseomalaga.org

Museo Revello de Toro

MALAGA. C/Afligidos.

Malagueñas. Until 29 January. The latest exhibition by distinguished Malaga artist Félix Revello de Toro, is based on the women of Malaga and includes a portrait of his own cousin, completed in 1973, who he often used as a model in paintings.

Baruj Salinas

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. Until 8 January.

Centro de Arte Contemporáneo.

Encuentro con la Belleza is the title of the exhibition that is currently on display in the CAC. It consists of twenty works by painter and sculptor Baruj Salinas (Havana 1938), a close friend of María Zambrano.

Coby Bloemsma

EL MORCHE. Until 23 March, Bio

Beach Club.

Torrox artist Coby Bloemsma is exhibiting a selection of her work.

MUSIC AND DANCE

La Cochera Cabaret

MALAGA. Avda de los Guindos.

7 January, 9.30pm. Professional

drummer and singer Muchopelo.

14 January, 12.30pm. Digo Lo Bien,

flamenco blues with audience participation.

15 January, 8-11pm. Swing party.

Tickets: www.lacocheraentrada.com/

Clarence Jazz Club

TORREMOLINOS. Calle Danza Invisible, 8.



Eduardo Sarabia, CAC Malaga

6 January, 10pm. Raquel Pelayo Trio.

7 January, 10pm. María Esther Quartet.

8 January, 6pm. Piano jazz special.

12 January, 10pm. Alhambra jazz jam session.

13 January, 10pm. Iñaki Moreno and the Crazy Busters.

14 January, 10pm. Diego Amador Trio.

15 January, 6pm. Piano jazz special.

19 January, 10pm. Alhambra jazz jam session.

Tickets: www.clarencejazzclub.com

Ventana Abierta Jazz Club

NERJA. Hotel Plaza Cavana, C/Granada.

13 January, 8pm. The 16 StringsTrío with Carlos Pino (guitar); Phil Wilkinson (guitar) and Francis Posé (double

bass). www.ventana-abierta.es Call: 690073871

The Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra

http://orquestafilarmonicademalaga.com/

MALAGA. Teatro Cervantes.

15, 16 January, 8pm. Music by Roldán and Strauss with soprano Vanessa Goikoetxea in the first half followed by Mussorgsky and Ravel.

MALAGA. Palacio de Ferias y Congresos.

8 January, 7pm. Three Kings gala performance with tribute to Walt Disney. With soprano Paula Ramírez Álvarez and tenor Vicente Bujalance Leal Includes the theme music from The Lion King, Beauty and the Beast, Pocahontas, Pirates of the Caribbean, Mary Poppins and many more. Tickets: https://entradas.mientrada.net/

Museum concerts

MALAGA.

Museo Picasso Málaga.

10 January, 8pm. Quinteto de Metales, members of the Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra and guests. Music by composers Enrique Creso, Gershwin and Bernstein. Tickets: https://tickets.museopicasso-malaga.org/

Museo Ruso.

28 January, 12pm. The Ensemble Músicos Concerto Málaga will play pieces by Falla and Diaghilev.

Louie Louie Bar

ESTEPONA. Estepona port.

6 January, after midnight. We Are Not Djs.

7 January, 9.30pm. KP Band.

12 January, 10pm. Le Fox Karaoke.

13 January, 11pm. Rob Sas and David rock duo.

www.louielouierockbar.com/

Da Bruno sul Mare

MARBELLA 11 January, 9pm. Paseo

Marítimo, s/n, Edificio Skol.

Adriana Rogan and live DJ session.

Book a table: www.dabruno.com

Salon Varietés

FUENGIROLA. 7.30pm daily, 7pm Sunday. The Salon Varietés Theatre, Calle Emancipation

Beyoncé and Bruno Mars tributes.

14, 15 January. A tribute to the modern-day king and queen of pop.



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MUSIC AND DANCE

El Molino de Cajiz

CAJIZ. *El Molino de Cajiz.*

15 January, 6pm. A night of music and poetry from celebrated Spanish and German Romantic musicians and writers. Interpretation of works by Robert Schumann, Joaquín Turina and Isaac Albéniz. Tickets: cornelia.lenzin@bluewin.ch or call 672 731 117.

THEATRE AND PANTO

Teatro Soho Caixabank

MALAGA. *Until 8 January, 2023.*

The new theatrical production from the theatre is Godspell. Tickets from El Corte Inglés. More info: www.teatrodelsoho.com

Salon Varietés

FUENGIROLA. *7.30pm daily, 7pm Sunday. The Salon Varietés Theatre, Calle Emancipation.*

Sylvia. *From 25 until 29 January.* A comedy with love and laughter. Bookings can be made by calling the box office Monday - Friday 11am-2:30pm, or on the website: www.salonvarietes.com

Carmen

MALAGA. *La Cochera Cabaret, Avda de los Guindos.*

15 January, 6pm. A contemporary adaptation of the classic opera Carmen.

LECTURES AND TOURS

The Arts Society

COSTA DEL SOL. *9 January,*

4.30pm. Salon Varietés, Fuengirola. Zaha Hadid - Architectural Superstar. Dame Zaha Hadid 1950 - 2016 was a star architect, a teacher, an artist and designer. Helen Sijssling will talk about her life and her many amazing achievements. www.theartsociety-costadelsol.org/

CHARITY

ARCH

ALHAURÍN EL GRANDE. *Sundays, 10am-2pm. Hacienda Moreno, Viña Borrego.*

The ARCH team at the Rescue Centre for Horses and Donkeys are open Sundays. Children can groom the donkeys and ponies, and volunteers are on hand to explain the charity's work. More information on Facebook: Centro Andalusi de Rescate de Caballos or www.horserescuespain.org

La Cala Lions

LA CALA DE MIJAS. *13 January. El Olivo de la Cala restaurant.*

Godspell, Malaga

The La Cala Lions are holding a charity event. For tickets contact Dave Greenwood: 672 584 489 or Anne Bowles: 607 879 450

MORE IDEAS

Replica Sailing Ship

MALAGA. *Until 15 January. Muelle Dos.*

The replica of the ship that made the first circumnavigation of the world, the Nao Victoria is docked in Malaga to celebrate the five-hundredth anniversary of that event.

Christmas 'ice-rink' and market

TORREMOLINOS. *Until 8 January, 11am-2pm and 6-10pm (See exceptions). La Nogalera. 1€.*

A synthetic ice-rink has been created for the festive season in Nogalera. The cost to use it is just one euro. Besides the rink there are activities for small children and stalls selling gifts and crafts.

Family English Cemetery Days

MALAGA. *Saturdays, 10am-2pm. Avda de Pries, 1.*

Book a family visit to the English Cemetery and they will provide a route to follow to discover some fascinating Malaga history, and games to play along the way - all in both English and Spanish. Reservations: cementerioinglesmalaga.org/en.

Lux Mundi

TORRE DEL MAR. *Lux Mundi Ecu-menical Centre, Avda Moscatel. 952 543 334, luxmundi@lux-mundi.org.*

Trip to Gibraltar. 12 January. Various departure points. An opportunity to visit the sales, purchase Duty Free Items and typical English items. Passport needed. 18€ with Friends of Lux Mundi card or 20€.

Trip to Puerto Banús and La Cañada Shopping Centre. 26 January. Various departure points. 16€ with Friends of Lux Mundi card or 18€.

Bookings: 952543334 or email: luxmundi@lux-mundi.org

CHRISTMAS FAIRS & EVENTS

La Concepción Botanical Garden Christmas lights

MALAGA. *Until 8 January 2023.*

Open air Christmas lights for all ages. Tickets can be purchased online from the [luces del botanico malaga](http://lucesdelbotanico.com) website.

Christmas Fair

GIBRALTAR. *Until 8 January 2023, 12pm to 7pm. John Mackintosh Square.*

All rides will be 3€ and there will be

Transmitting truth with new photographic exhibition



Photographer Edu Rosa (L) at his exhibition in Torremolinos. SUR.

TONY BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. The Malaga-based photographer, Edu Rosa, has launched his latest exhibition at the Sala Elena Laverón in the Picasso Cultural Centre in Torremolinos, a collection of colour and black and white images that can be viewed until Saturday 21 January.

The exhibition, titled 'From contemplation to the appropriation of the landscape', brings together a collection of work produced by the artist over the last few decades which generates new representations of the world that surrounds us.

The photographer describes the exhibition as a "photographic essay" that he has created from the observation of the intervention of the human being on the landscape and the environment,

and also on elements of the landscape that are always there, but which we rarely notice.

The collection is based on the popular phrase of the philosopher Susan Sontag, who said, "Every photograph transmits a truth, a truth that could not be known if it had not been captured in it."

The exhibition, which is free, can be visited from Monday to Friday between 9am and 9pm, and on Saturday between 9am and 1pm.

Edu Rosa has more than thirty years of experience as a photographer. In addition to working as a professional photographer, he teaches introductory photography courses under the motto, 'Learn photography through narrative', where importance is given to the visual story rather than to the technique.

various stalls. For more info: info@culture.gi

O. V. FILMS

SUR in English advises calling cinemas to check for any last-minute time changes. Lunchtime and late night screenings weekends only.

Yelmo Cines, Plaza Mayor

MALAGA. *Centro de Ocio, Plaza Mayor, Avda Alfonso Ponce León. Tel: 902902103. www.yelmocines.es.*

The Menu: 21.50 (Tues).

Avatar The Way of Water 3D: 20.15 (Sat-Tues).

Avatar The Way of Water: 20.15 (Fri-Sun).

Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre: 12.40 (Sat, Sun); 19.25 (Tues).

Puss in Boots: 17.05 (Tues).

M3gan: 20.15 (Tues).

I Wanna Dance With Somebody: 22.15 (Tues).

André Rieu in Dublin: 19.30 (Tues, Thurs).

Yelmo Cines, Rincón

RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA. *C/ Arroyo Totalán. Tel: 902220922.*

Zaha Hadid lecture, Fuengirola

www.yelmocines.es

The Menu: 22.15 (Tues).

Avatar The Way of Water 3D: 17.15 (Tues).

A Man Called Otto: 17.00 (Tues).

M3gan: 19.40 (Tues).

Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre: 19.20 (Tues).

André Rieu in Dublin: 19.30 (Tues, Thurs).

Yelmo Cines, Vialia

MALAGA. *Centro Comercial Vialia. Tel: 902220922*

The Menu: 12.50 (Sat).

A Man Called Otto: 12.20 (Sat); 19.05 (Tues).

Avatar The Way of Water 3D: 12.15 (Sat, Sun); 20.00 (every day).

Avatar The Way of Water: 22.00 (Tues).

She Said: 16.35 (Tues).

Puss In Boots: 17.05 (Tues).

M3gan: 20.10 (Tues).

I Wanna Dance With Somebody:

21.35 (Tues).

Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre: 12.20 (Sat, Sun); 19.20 (Tues).

André Rieu in Dublin: 19.30 (Tues, Thurs).

Cinesur Miramar

FUENGIROLA. *Avda de la Encarnación. Tel: 952198600.*

Avatar The Way of Water: 11.45 (Sat, Sun); 17.30, 21.20 (every day).

Avatar The Way of Water 3D: 12.10 (Sat, Sun); 17.20 (Mon-Thurs).

Puss In Boots: 12.15 (Sat, Sun), 16.00 (Fri-Sun); 17.15 (Mon-Thurs).

M3gan: 21.40 (every day)

Duck Soup: 20.00 (Tues).

Living: 17.15 (every day).

Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre: 19.20 (every day).

Young Frankenstein: 20.00 (Thurs)

Cinesur Ingenio

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. *Avda Juan Carlos, 1. Tel: 667773187.*

Avatar The Way of Water: 22.10 (every day).

M3gan: 17.50 (every day).

Puss In Boots: 12.10 (every day).

Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre: 16.30 (every day).

Duck Soup: 20.00 (Tues).

Pavarotti in Hyde Park: 20.00 (Wed).

Young Frankenstein: 20.00 (Thurs)

Cine Albéniz

MALAGA. *C/ Alcazaba, 4. Tel: 902360295. www.cinealbeniz.com.*

Living: 16.30, 18.30, 20.30 (every day).

Aftersun: 20.40, 22.30 (every day).

Red Dog

PUERTO BANÚS. *Avda Julio Iglesias. <https://reddogcinemas.com/>*

A Man Called Otto: 15.15, 19.50 (Fri-Sun); 17.00 (Mon-Thurs).

She Said: 19.10 (Mon-Thurs); 19.20 (Fri-Sun).

Puss In Boots: 12.00 (Sat, Sun); 15.15 (Fri-Sun); 17.15 (Mon-Thurs).

Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre: 15.00, 19.30 (Fri-Sun); 17.15, 19.20 (Mon-Thurs).

I Wanna Dance With Somebody: 15.15 (Fri-Sun); 19.15 (Mon-Thurs).

M3gan: 15.30 (Fri-Sun); 17.15 (Mon-Thurs); 19.40 (Sat, Sun); 19.20 (Mon-Thurs).

Avatar The Way of Water 3D: 11.30 (Sat, Sun); 15.00 (Fri-Sun), 17.00 (Mon-Thurs); 18.30 (Fri-Sun).

Avatar The Way of Water: 11.45 (Sat, Sun); 15.15 (Fri-Sun); 17.15 (Mon-Thurs), 18.45 (Fri-Sun); 20.45 (Mon-Thurs)

Autocine Málaga

MALAGA. *Guadalhorce Industrial Estate. Ctra. de la Azucarera Intelhorce. www.autocines.com/cine-malaga/*

Puss in Boots: 19.15 (until 7 January).

M3gan: 22.30 (from 7 until 12 January).



An image via the CRISPR-Cas technology that has made the research possible. R. C.

The bacteria that lives forever

Genetic manipulation. Spanish scientists have recovered parts of proteins from over two billion years ago which can be used to cure genetic illnesses

FERMIN APEZTEGUIA

The solutions for illnesses that devastate humanity today could be found in proteins which have been identified from over two billion years ago.

An international research group led by the CIC nanoGUNE laboratory in San Sebastián has for the first time reconstructed the ancestors of the CRISPR-Cas gene editing system and studied the way they have evolved over time.

The results of this work, which have just been published in the Nature Microbiology scientific journal, look to have “revolutio-

nary applications” in the diagnosis and treatment of illnesses which devastate human beings today such as cancer, diabetes and even others such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

“It will take over ten years for all this to be applied clinically, but we have taken an important step in our knowledge of how we have evolved from a molecular point of view,” says Raúl Pérez-Jiménez, who headed the research project.

It was supported by specialist groups at the CSIC, the University of Alicante, The Ciberer biomedical research unit into rare illnesses, the Ramón y Cajal hospital-IRYCIS and other Spanish and international institutions.

Repairing genomes

The CRISPR-Cas technology, which was defined by Francis Mojica, a scientist at the University of Alicante, revolutionised genetical editing about ten years ago.

Thanks to this technology it is now possible for scientists to cut the genome and repair it wherever they want to, using a type of molecular scissors.

The Nanobiotechnology group headed by Pérez-Jiménez has spent years studying the way proteins have evolved from the origins of life to the present day. The team focuses on carrying

out reconstructions of ancient proteins and genes of extinct organisms to see what qualities they have and whether they could be used in today’s biotechnological applications.

Using computer techniques, they have successfully reconstructed the evolutionary history of the CRISPR-Cas systems from 2.6 billion years ago to today.

The study of the evolution of the DNA and the ways in which the body has repaired its damage has opened the way to the design of therapies with the ability to repair cells.

A new ‘magic bullet’

The research has led to confidence in the future viability of modifying mutated cells which cause an illness. It could be cancer, diabetes and even ALS.

“The idea,” Pérez-Jiménez explains, “is to replace the bad information in a strand of DNA with good information. The objective now is to devise a system of transport which can be introduced directly into our cells, one which directly targets those which have the potential to be modified”.

A new ‘magic bullet’, as German scientist Paul Ehrlich, who won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1908, defined it.



Raúl Pérez-Jiménez

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Test your fitness with these exercises.

Balance, getting up without support, the step test and waist measurement show whether you've let yourself go

MARTA FERNÁNDEZ VALLEJO



Am I in good physical shape? It's a question we start to ask ourselves after a certain age, especially if we don't test ourselves by going to the gym. To answer it, we might consider how we feel when we walk up a flight of stairs at a good pace - do I feel tired or not? - or after running to catch a bus, or when we're about to step on the weighing scales.

The best way to know how healthy we are is to have a medical check-up, but to self-diagnose our state of health there are certain simple exercises which can be done at home and some body parameters which are easy to measure. These can

give us reliable clues as to whether we are in good shape or have been neglecting ourselves. They can even give us an idea of the health risks we face.

Physical trainers and doctors propose that we try the following exercises.

Balance

Balance tests can

predict future cognitive impairment, risk of falls and injuries of the musculoskeletal system.

"People who fail to perform these tests in the minimum time frame have sarcopenia (loss of muscle mass, strength and function) and risk factors for cardiovascular problems, type 2 diabetes and obesity," says Javier Rubio Pérez, a specialist in sports medicine and member of the governing board of the Spanish Society of Sports Medicine.

To test yourself, see if you can do this:

Get up from a chair: This is an easy and objective way of assessing your physical condition. "The exercise consists of sitting down and getting up from a chair without using your hands (keep them crossed in front of your chest) as many times as possible for one minute," Rubio Pérez says.

A woman aged between 50 and 54 should be able to do this at least 23 times and up to 60, and a man aged between 30 and 34 should be capable of a minimum of 23 and a maximum of 72.

There is a more demanding version of this exercise, too: can you get up from a chair with one leg stretched out and without using your hands, with only the support of the other leg?

Standing on one leg: If we can do this for ten seconds after the age of 50 to 55, it can be a sign of good health. A study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine concluded that people who can't do it could have double the risk of dying early. Unlike endurance, strength and

And for athletes...

Strength Pull-ups

8 repetitions for men and two for women.

Speed Sprint for 100 metres

Under 15 seconds for men and under 18 for women.

Endurance Squats

200 squats in less than five minutes, men and women.

Performance

Jump hurdles without running

At hip height for men and mid-thigh height for women.

Cardiovascular endurance

Run 5 kilometres

In under 25 minutes for men and under 30 minutes for women.

flexibility, "balance is normally maintained well until the age of 60, which is when it starts to deteriorate relatively quickly," says Diego Sánchez, a physical trainer who specialises in fitness for elderly people.

Get up off the floor

The exercise of sitting down and getting up from the floor without the support of hands or kneeling reflects muscle strength, flexibility, balance and body composition (weight).

"There are studies to show that this ability is a good predictor of mortality through any factor," Sánchez says. You get ten points if you don't use your hands or knees and lose a point for every 'help' (hand, forearm, knee or part of the leg in contact with the floor). Those with fewer than eight points have twice the risk of death in the following six years.

"There is some logic to this,

because this difficulty in getting up is associated with a sedentary lifestyle and excess weight, muscular atrophy, sarcopenia (loss of muscle) and osteoporosis, all of which are risk factors for cardiovascular problems and falls," Sánchez says.

Heart rate

The heart rate at rest is a way of measuring the health and physical condition of the heart. For most adults a healthy rate between 60 and 100 beats a minute. A lower one is a sign of being in good physical shape, as in the case of athletes.

The step test: This assesses endurance, an essential physical quality which tests the heart and respiratory system more than the musculature.

Take your pulse before starting. Climb a 35-centimetre step for three minutes with one leg and then three minutes with the other. Stop and take your pulse again. Subtract the resting heart rate from that figure.

If you are under the age of 45 you have passed the test if the result is between 60 and 69. Above that age, more than 65 points means you have failed and fewer than 49 shows that you have excellent endurance.

Waist measurement

"Accumulated fat around the waist is a sign of someone's cardiovascular risk, even if they have a normal body mass index. It gives an idea of central obesity, in other words the amount of fat accumulated around the abdominal organs," warns Dr David Rubio. "Excess body fat has been associated with an increased likelihood of developing metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, degenerative diseases in the musculoskeletal system, anxiety and depression," he says.

The WHO considers the maximum healthy abdominal circumference for women to be 88 centimetres, and 102 centimetres for men. Coronary risk increases by 40 per cent if the waist is more than 14 centimetres above those limits.



Buffets are back

ANDREW J. LINN



One of the casualties of the pandemic was the self-service buffet. Obviously, it had to go, as even with mask wearing, it was not safe to have people serving themselves from communal dishes. Anyway, we love these buffets or we hate them, and while the snobs refuse to serve their own food and will expect someone to bring it to them, most of us are happy to help ourselves to the selection on offer.

Some friends returning to the coast via Madrid stopped off at the Ritz Hotel this week and were more than impressed by the lunch buffet. There is no need to list everything here, but obviously classical dishes were available as well as different paellas, beans with clams, roast duck, langostinos de Sanlúcar and the best jamón de bellota, plus dozens more. The price was 250 euros, wine extra.

The common belief is that

type of buffet are working on slim margins, judging by the amount piled onto plates and the number of times customers return for more. However, the numbers demonstrate that they are a profitable method of serving food.

All restaurants recycle leftovers, but a buffet gives more opportunities than regular meals. A fresh fish one day will be a fish pâté or croquettes the next, or even the ingredients of a bouillabaisse.

The location of different dishes usually involves placing the most expensive at the end of the table, where diners arrive with no more room on their plates.

Numbers demonstrate that providing this type of buffet is a profitable method of serving food

Food will generally be highly seasoned in order to get customers drinking plenty of stomach-filling water and soft drinks.

WINE OF THE WEEK

Fraga do Corvo 2019

A beautiful white wine made with the Godello grape and winner of six international gold medals in the last two years. From the small Monterrei region and with limited production, an outstanding example of what Spain is currently capable of in the white department. Pesticide and herbicide free. Priced at around 12 euros.



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TIPI TAPA RESTAURANT



Restaurante Tipi Tapa, gastronomy and entertainment

This venue in Fuengirola specialises in grilled meats and has a programme of flamenco shows to liven up your evenings

FUENGIROLA

SUR. Dining isn't just about eating, it's about enjoying the surroundings, the service and having a good time. That is what Restaurante Tipi Tapa offers, as it combines the best cuisine with unique



flamenco shows to give customers an unforgettable evening.

The menu features top-quality 'denomination of origin' meats, both from Spain and other countries. For those who appreciate

The restaurant offers a selection of special menus at this time of the year

Spanish cuts the Restaurant offers Iberian Black Cow, Galician IPG, Retinta de Cádiz or Galician Ox, and for those who prefer international cuts, Irish Angus, Charolais from England, Sashi from Finland or Simmental from the Swiss Alps. All of them carry a certificate of origin. Tipi Tapa also offers beef dry-aged for up to 40 days, a process that gives premium meats the maximum flavour and the best texture.

Other options on the menu include salads, fish and seafood, all in a welcoming atmosphere and with attentive and friendly staff.

As for the entertainment, which can be enjoyed on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 7.30 p.m., Tipi Tapa offers a great flamenco show by five top artists, with guitar, singing and dancing from Manuel Alcaide and his company, one of the most renowned on the Costa del Sol.

Furthermore, at this time of year the restaurant has a wide selection of special menus for the tra-



TIPI TAPA'S MEAT SELECTION

Nationals:

- Iberian Black Cow
- Galician IPG
- Retinta de Cádiz
- Galician Ox

Internationals:

- Irish Angus
- Charolais from England
- Finnish Sashi
- Swiss Alpine Simmental

ditional office- and family- get-togethers, as well as for Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Different exciting proposals to suit every taste or pocket. These menus are designed with care and experience by our customer-service team.

In cuisine, as in the world of fashion, trends come and go, driven not only by the demand for new and fresh things, but also by changing lifestyles and the need to relate better to planet Earth and our own bodies. Vegetarian, ethical and sustainable produce and a return to traditional cooking are some of the trends we will see in gastronomy in 2023. But there is more too to discover and enjoy a happy and tasty new year.

Back to our origins

Many people yearn to resample the foods they ate when they were younger. Today's generation cook very little, and the most traditional recipes are being lost in our homes. Fortunately, professional cuisine has taken over and more and more restaurants are offering us the chance to go back to our childhood with dishes from yesteryear.

Vegetarian menus: Even Michelin-starred restaurants such as El Lago (Marbella) offer 100% vegetarian menus with the philosophy of making the most of local produce. Fernando Villasclaras creates dishes such as courgette flower stuffed with spinach and pistachio pesto or roast parsnips with bay, pear and pecan sorbet. Miguel Palma's live lettuce at La Taberna de Mike Palmer (behind Malaga) highlights the reign of green.

New experiences: Going to a restaurant is undoubtedly an experience. Restaurants go one step further and offer menus personalised to the diner's taste. There is no stipulated menu: the customer decides on the dishes they want and the chef adapts them to create small dishes.

Simplicity: The premise is clear: find a good product, cook it to perfection and serve it on a plate. No more is needed. Restaurants such as Verum (Malaga), Erre & Urrechu or Roostiq (Marbella), are committed to simple, quality grilled products.

Sustainability: This means consuming produce from the environment and knowing the ingredients by reading the product labels. Consumers have the power to change the world by making informed food choices. A simple gesture, such as taking bags to the supermarket or going back to paper at the deli, makes all the difference.

Zero waste: When we talk about waste, we always think of the big food companies, but every household in Spain wasted an average of approximately 70 kilos of food in 2021, according to data from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. In order not to throw anything away, we should try to plan our meals and shop-



Air fryers have become very popular to save electricity and to eat healthily. SUR

Foodie trends for 2023

Healthy eating. Changing lifestyles has seen a move towards vegetarian, ethical and sustainable produce. Here are some of the things to watch out for this year

MANU BALANZINO



ping list.

Shopping basket: The cost of our shopping has seen an increase over the last few months. That's why, according to a Just Eat survey, 64% of users will save the leftovers from their food order. We throw away a lot, we know that, and from now on we will probably make sure we don't waste anything.

Fast but healthy: Fast food conjures up the image of junk food. Today, society is going through a change of mentality towards healthier and more sustainable food. For this reason, consumers are looking for more homemade dishes to take away, leaving behind the classic burgers and pizzas.

Food and drink

Yaupon tea: This drink is made from the leaves of the Cassina, a shrub grown in the southern US. Although it is considered an infusion, yaupon can be a substitute for coffee as it has caffeine but no high acidity.

Sweet and spicy: You'll hear

'Swicy' a few times in 2023, a term that fuses sweet and spicy, a combination of flavours present in oriental cuisine. We can even find chocolate to which a touch of chilli is added. Heinz has launched Honeyracha which blends honey and Sriracha (a fermented chill

i sauce), for some markets.

Southeast Asian flavours: It is expected that 2023 will welcome Asian dishes from Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines, together with their spices, in a gastronomically globalised world.

Flours made as a by-product of vegetable milk: 57% of Spaniards consume vegetable alternatives to dairy products, according to a recent study. Therefore, vegetable milks, made from oats, soya, coconut, rice or hazelnuts, among others, generate a by-product, the pulp. Companies are already making cakes and biscuits from the pulp after it has been dehydrated.

Vegetable pastas: Eating fruit and vegetables is fundamental to

our diet. However, the purchase of fresh fruit and vegetables in households in the first half of 2022 has fallen by 14% compared to the same period in 2021, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. For this reason, companies that make pasta are preparing to launch special lines made with vegetables.

Dates: There is always one product that is expected to be the talk of the year, and 2023 is the year of the date. Dates are a natural sweetener and there are derivatives such as syrup, paste and dehydrated ones. This fruit, which provides multiple benefits to the body, is an essential ingredient in the preparation of cake bases or homemade cereal bars.

Kelp: It is well known that seaweed helps the environment and, at the same time, does not require fresh water, a very precious commodity at the moment. Although it is mainly consumed in oriental cuisine, seaweed has been introduced in Europe in many forms, from chips, noodles, sauces to alcoholic beverages.

Chlorophyll: This green pigment is present in algae as well as in plants. It helps to improve the body's defences, the digestive system and, among many other things, balances cholesterol and glucose. It is already trending on Pinterest.

Avocado oil: Spain consumes 2.5 kilos of avocado a year, per capita. This fruit, cultivated in the Axarquía region, is rich in omega-3, a fatty acid ideal for regulating cholesterol. You can find many products made from avocado from oil, to gazpacho, to bread.

Vegan fish and seafood: A few years ago, there was already talk of plant-based seafood. It is true that the trend was much talked about, but did not take off. Vegan chicken, pork and veal are already a reality, there is a wide variety in supermarkets, and it is predicted that the time will come for seafood. In Granada, Co-

operativa La Palma makes tunato, a vegetable alternative to eating bluefin tuna made from tomatoes.

Discarded fish: Chef Ángel León, at the head of the three-Michelin-starred restaurant Aponiente (Cadiz province), has a main objective to make good use of discarded fish. "Humans only use 36% of the food that the sea could provide, destroying everything else to get it," he argued at the last Encounters of the Seas conference. His aim is to introduce fishmeal and fish paste into popular products such as sausages, hamburgers and sausages.



▲ Asian style cuisine, especially dishes from Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Cooking equipment

Air fryer: Few people will not have heard of this appliance that has revolutionised kitchens in 2022. It is an oil-free fryer that bakes, grills and roasts. It is not a fryer as such but a convection oven with a fan that operates at a very high temperature. Its popularity is such that there are dozens of websites, videos, books and applications dedicated to the oil-free fryer.

New technology

Social media: Who hasn't turned to social media to see the gastronomic offer and dishes? Social media has become essential for restaurants in order to attract customers and be able to entertain them.

Just a click away: The big chains have increased their online sales. We no longer only buy household goods or clothes, but we also buy meat, fruit and vegetables online. Even small producers are turning to this method. According to data analysed by Just Eat, 63% of Spaniards have already bought food products online at some point.



Arvin Appiah (c) with coach Pepe Mel (r) in Coín on Wednesday. M. POZO

Appiah and Delmás - new faces to help revive Malaga CF

The Blue and Whites kick off the new year on Saturday at La Rosaleda when they take on visitors Tenerife

SUR

MALAGA. After a disastrous 2022, Malaga CF go into their January games with optimism and with a couple of new faces in the squad.

The first confirmed signing in the winter transfer window was 27-year-old Spaniard Julián Delmás, who comes from FC Cartagena. The Zaragoza-born right back made his debut with the Blue and Whites in Wednesday's friendly against Swiss side Winterthur, played behind closed doors in Coín.

Also now in Malaga is former Nottingham Forest and England U19s winger Arvin Amoakoh Appiah. The 22-year-old, who was born in Amsterdam and moved to Nottingham as a child, joins Malaga on loan from Almeria.

After visiting the offices at La Rosaleda on Wednesday morn-

ing Appiah was in Coín to watch his new teammates play the Swiss first division side - and lose 0-1. He arrived in Spanish football in 2019, being the most expensive signing to date in the Segunda, when Almeria paid Nottingham Forest nearly nine million euros. He played the first half of this season on loan to Tenerife, who happen to be Malaga's next opponents in the league.

Another possible new arrival is Ivory Coast winger Lago Junior, whose confirmation is pending the termination of his contract with Mallorca. These new faces would give Malaga coach Pepe Mel more choice in attack, although this could involve changes for the other members of the team, such as Febas, Fran Villalba and Chavarria.

Malaga's first game of 2023 is this Saturday, 7 January, at 6.30pm against Tenerife at La Rosaleda stadium.

Prior to Saturday's game the Blue and Whites invited fans to an open training session at La Rosaleda at 10.20am this Thursday 5 January.



Celebrity whistle-blowers

'Card crazy' referee Mateu Lahoz appears to be preparing for life after the peak of his career



In the very near future, expect to see Antonio Mateu Lahoz leaping across your television screen on Strictly Come Dancing or Spain's equivalent.

He is the football referee who appears to be working on his celebrity status for the day he hangs up his whistle.

Señor Lahoz attracted worldwide attention when he administered seventeen cards in the World Cup quarter-final between Argentina and the Netherlands. Lionel Messi called for him to be sent home.

Now he's back home, he's surpassed the achievement in Qatar by showing 18 cards, awarding a disputed penalty, and sending off two players in the Catalan derby. It was three dismissals, but he accepted the advice of his VAR to allow Leandro Cabrera to continue.

He started the game with a peck on the cheek for Xavi Hernández in an attempt to diffuse a tension. He ended up booking the Barcelona manager and the majority of those involved on the field of play as he went card crazy.

Xavi didn't blame Lahoz for his side's failure to win, the penalty they conceded, or even Jordi Alba's red card, but concluded that "... he let the game get out of control".

Others are less kind; they accuse him of being an attention-seeker.

This could be unfair for a man who has been to two World Cups, the last European Championships and was the referee for the 2021 Champions League final. When Fifa needed someone to control the United States versus Iran game, they opted

for Lahoz. He was an ideal peacekeeper who only booked three players in a politically explosive fixture.

Lahoz is one of the best, not just in Spain, but the world. He's participated in more finals than many of the players he's dealing with on a weekly basis. He handles games with personality, allows play to flow and converses with players and managers alike.

That's not to say he's not working on the image and brand for the weekends beyond football.

One top referee told me that once he was too old to be considered for top-level Uefa and Fifa matches he would referee games in a manner he wanted rather than that of the assessor in the director's box. If a player swore or gave back-chat, he would no longer turn a blind-eye or deaf ear and he'd book him. Take note that seven of the Barcelona yellow cards last week were for dissent.

Just after Premier League referee Jeff Winter had retired

from full-time football, he was in the middle for the Masters' Football competition on Sky Sports in the summer. It started as a bit of five-a-side fun, but once ex-pros started playing it became fiercely competitive. The organisers introduced a sin bin which cooled the heads.

It became evident that Mr Winter was enjoying the attention of schooling the players, sending them to the naughty step, and having the cameras trained on him. Our TV director responded by telling the camera operatives to keep him out-of-shot as often as possible.

I suspect that Señor Lahoz is following the example of my Premier League whistle-blower by applying a zero-tolerance policy now the World Cup and Champions League final days are behind him.

Like Mr Winter, he's keen to be in the limelight for celebrity appearances, the after-dinner speaking circuit, and ballroom-dancing spectacles on the television.



Mateu Lahoz



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Spain to make debut under new coach at La Rosaleda against Norway in March

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MALAGA. Malaga CF's La Rosaleda stadium will be returning to the limelight with an important match between the new look Spanish football side and Norway on Saturday 25 March, a qualifier for Euro 2024 in Germany.

Hosting this match will be a boost for La Rosaleda, which aims to become one of the venues for Spain's joint bid with Portugal and Ukraine for the World Cup in 2030.

This will be the first official game in a new phase for Spain under new head coach Luis de la Fuente, appointed after their loss

to Morocco which saw them out of the 2022 World Cup.

The match is considered vital for Spain and not easy as Norway come armed with star player Erling Haaland.

Altogether, Spain have played ten matches at the Malaga stadium, although most, unlike this one, were friendlies.

A swimmer who sees no barriers

Amira Bencherqi. The 16-year-old lost a leg in a car crash in Morocco when she was four. Now living in Malaga, she is a world champion and is dreaming of the Paralympics



MARINA RIVAS



We should all learn to complain less, make the most of our strengths and not let our weaknesses get us down. We should understand that we cannot live an inward-looking life, in constant sadness. We can all get ahead and we have to give ourselves the chance to do so. But it takes meeting someone like Amira Bencherqi to be reminded of this.

It has been 12 years since tragedy struck the Bencherqi household: a terrible car accident. The youngest member of the family, Amira (who was in the car with her father and one of her aunts), went through the windscreen and it almost severed her leg completely. She still has occasional flashbacks to that traumatic time even though she was only four years old when it happened.

That was in Morocco, the country her parents came from. However, she could not be treated properly there so she had to be transferred to Gran Canaria by helicopter. The diagnosis was not positive, and little Amira lost her leg. But what for many people would have seemed like the end of the world, for others it is a new opportunity for living.

"My mother was very strong, she didn't want us to cry, she always

said the important thing is that I was still alive," Amira says. Her father, on the other hand, took it very badly. "He felt guilty after the accident," she says.

But, despite the tears and painful nights, they decided to face up to reality. If they had thrown in the towel at that point and withdrawn into themselves, Amira would not be who she is today and who she could still become. She is 16 now, a brilliant student at school in Malaga and her dream is to go to university in the USA, with a sports scholarship.

She is a very intelligent, sensitive and cheerful teenager but what is most incredible is that she has 53 medals from championships in Spain and is the current World Games champion in the 400-metre freestyle and runner-up in the 100-metre backstroke and 50-metre freestyle in the S9 adapted category.

Amira was born in Lanzarote, where her parents met (her father

is from Rabat and her mother is Saharawi), but she feels 'malagueña' because after the accident, thanks to the encouragement of her mother, this is where her life changed radically.

"My mother always liked Malaga but it was because of me that she made the decision to come here. She always supported me in my swimming and there weren't many important competitions in the Canaries. She saw that moving to Malaga would give me an opportunity to progress in my career," she explains.

After losing her leg, swimming became Amira's new motivation,

"In adapted swimming I see people with disabilities even more severe than mine and then I feel grateful it wasn't any worse"

◀ Medals.

She has 53 Spanish medals and a gold from the World Games and is still only 16 years old.

FRANCIS SILVA

▲ Real Club Mediterráneo.

Amira, who was born in Lanzarote, trains here under the well-known coach Melquiades Álvarez.

FRANCIS SILVA

her way of escaping the horror of what had happened. "When I started to compete in adapted swimming and started to see people with disabilities even more severe than mine, I felt grateful because things could have been a lot worse," she says.

Sacrifice

She progressed so well and so quickly that the islands became too small and her mother did not hesitate: she gave absolutely everything up for Amira. "She was a translator for the government at the United Nations and she left her job because in the beginning I needed a great deal of help and she wanted to look after me full-time. She sacrificed her professional career to support me. I took up all her time," Amira explains.

At present she lives with her mother. Unfortunately her father couldn't find a job in Malaga and chose to remain in Lanzarote, where he could work and earn enough to sustain them. They get together occasionally.

Otherwise, Amira's life is that of any other top-level athlete and that's how she wants to be seen, as a sportswoman like any other. She does, however, want to fly high. She leaves school at 2.30pm and goes straight to the pool at the Real

Club Mediterráneo, where she trains under Melquiades Álvarez. She has lunch, changes and is in the water from 4pm to 6pm, and then spends another hour and a half weight-training.

She says having one leg is not an impediment; she has always had a brilliant ability to find solutions to any problem.

"I compete with people with and without disabilities. It really encourages me to improve and it gives me experience. I swim against people who are in better physical condition than me and that helps me to gain the inner strength to try to beat them," she says.

And so far it has indeed helped, because her progress has been remarkable: she has been winning medals since she was ten and at her first attempt at a major international competition, at the World Games in Portugal in November, she won a gold and two silvers.

Now that she has reached this high level, Amira Bencherqi has no intention of stopping.

"In Spain there is a very high standard in adapted swimming, but my aim is to compete in the Games in 2024 and, if not, in Los Angeles in 2028," she says. For people who do not see barriers, nothing is impossible.

SPORT IN PHOTOS



▲ **Dakar rally.** At 60 years of age, Carlos Sainz is once again Spain's star driver in the Dakar rally, which got under way on 1 January. Driving his RS Q-tron E2 for Team Audi Sport, Sainz was leading the board after the first stage. The veteran, who drives with co-pilot Lucas Cruz, lost time on Tuesday due to a mechanical fault, but finished third on Wednesday, going into Thursday fourth in the overall standings. **EP**



▲ **Respects to Pelé.** Players and fans in Spain's Primera division paid their respects to Brazilian football idol Pelé with a minute's silence before their games last weekend. Above Valladolid (left) and Real Madrid line up at the José Zorrilla stadium at the start of last Friday's match in Valladolid to remember the international star who died on 29 December. **EFE**

► **Fun runs.** New Year's Eve saw a number of San Silvestre road races and fun runs around Spain. In Torremolinos (pictured) more than 1,000 runners took part in the event, organised to help those in danger of social exclusion. The runners, many of them in fancy dress, followed a three-kilometre route through the old town and on to the finish line in Plaza La Nogalera.

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USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCIES

Emergency operator	112
National Police	091
Local (municipal) Police	092
Medical	061
Fire	080
Guardia Civil	062
Sea Rescue	900202202
Crime report	902102112

ENGLISH-SPEAKING HELP

Samaritans in Spain	900525100
Alcoholics Anonymous	600379110
Age Care	952933409
Age Concern (Estepona)	722606347

ANDALUSIAN HEALTH SERVICE

Salud Responde 955545060 (Doctors' appointments and advice)

ESTEPONA

Bus Station	955038665
Taxi Service	952802900
Tourist Office	952802002
Town Hall	952801100
Foreign Residents Dept.	952809031

FUENGIROLA

Bus Station	952475066
Taxi Service	952471000
Tourist Office	952467625
Town Hall	952589300
Foreign Residents Dept.	952589440

MALAGA

Bus Station	952350061
Railway Station	902240202
Taxi Service	952345693
Tourist Office	951926020

MARBELLA

Bus Station	955038665
Taxi Service	952774488
Tourist Office	952768760
Town Hall	952761100
Foreign Residents Dept.	952768760

MIJAS

Town Hall	952485900
Town Hall Las Lagunas	952473125
Taxi	952478288
Tourism Office	952589034
Foreign Resident Dept.	952589010

NERJA

Bus Station	902422242
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Taxi Service	952520537
Tourist Information	952521531
Town Hall	952548400
Foreign Resident Dept.	952548401

TORREMOLINOS

Bus Station	902143144
Taxi Service	952380600
Tourist Office	952371909
Town Hall	952379400
Foreign Residents Dept.	952374231

BENALMÁDENA

Bus Station	902450550
Taxi Service	952441545
Tourist Office	952442494
Town Hall	952374231
Foreign Residents Dept.	952442494

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA

Bus Station	952503162
Taxi	952540016
Town Hall	952559100
Tourist Office	952541104

GIBRALTAR

General emergency	199/112(mobiles)
Fire/ambulance (emergency)	190
Tourist Office	(00350) 20074950
Taxi	(00350) 20070027

MALAGA PORT INFORMATION

CRUISE SHIP MOVEMENTS (SOURCE: MALAGA PORT AUTHORITY)

Ship	Date	From	Next port	Docks	Sails
Norwegian Sun	13/01	Gibraltar	Cadiz	07.00	20.00
Viking Venus	14/01	Cartagena	Vigo	08.00	19.00
MSC Lirica	15/01	Ceuta	Alicante	07.00	18.00
Norwegian Sun	24/01	Gibraltar	Cadiz	07.00	20.00
Aidastella	24/01	Arrecife	Cartagena	10.00	19.30
MSC Lirica	25/01	Ceuta	Alicante	07.00	18.00
Norwegian Sun	03/02	Gibraltar	Cadiz	07.00	20.00
MSC Lirica	04/02	Ceuta	Alicante	07.00	18.00
Norwegian Sun	14/02	Gibraltar	Cadiz	07.00	20.00
MSC Lirica	14/02	Ceuta	Alicante	07.00	18.00
Aidastella	14/02	Arrecife	Cartagena	10.00	19.30
Norwegian Sun	24/02	Gibraltar	Cadiz	07.00	20.00
MSC Lirica	24/02	Ceuta	Alicante	07.00	18.00



CONSULATES

Great Britain	C/. Mauricio Moro Pareto 2- 2. Málaga	952352300	France	Calle Salvago, 2, Malaga	954293200
USA	Av. Juan Gómez 8. Ed. Lucía 1-C. Fuengirola	952474891	Italy	Alameda Principal, 35, Malaga	902502512
Belgium	Avda Ricardo Soriano 20-3C, Marbella	951516019	Austria	Alameda de Colón 26, Malaga	646060972
Denmark	Calle Córdoba 6 404, Malaga	952211797	Finland	Calle Córdoba, 6, Malaga	952212435
Norway	Avda Los Boliches, 60, Edf Rosenkranz, Fuengirola	952667955	Saudi Arabia	Mauricio M. Pareto 2 bloque Sur 2º, Malaga	952310358
Canada	C/Cervantes, Edif. Horizonte, Malaga	952223346	Greece	Dr Manuel Perez Bryan, Malaga	95225689
Germany	Mauricio Moro Pareto 2, Malaga	952363591	Iceland	Calle Marín García, Malaga	952661200
Sweden	Calle Córdoba 6, 5th floor, Malaga	952604383	Philippines	C/Marqués de Larios 4, 2º, Malaga	952771850
Ireland	Avda. Los Boliches, Fuengirola	952475108	Hungary	Av. de Velásquez, (Crce aeropuerto) Malaga	952236966

THE STARS

- 

Aquarius
January 21st - February 19th
A romance that had lost its sparkle could begin to show promise, as Mars pushes ahead in Gemini after its retro phase of several weeks.
- 

Pisces
February 20th - March 20th
If you've been busy streamlining, clearing out clutter and getting your place shipshape, you've done the right thing. Next week you'll feel ready to go ahead with any plans you have.
- 

Aries
March 21st - April 20th
Take heart if negotiations, key conversations or deals have left you disappointed, next week things may start to look a little rosier.
- 

Taurus
April 21st - May 21st
Finances begin to look more promising as energetic Mars moves ahead after six weeks in reverse. Use this time as an opportunity to cut back on expenses.
- 

Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st
If you've been dealing with discouragement or difficult people, things will slowly change. You'll feel able to set sail in the direction of your dreams and ambitions.
- 

Cancer
June 22nd - July 23rd
Letting go of just some of your emotional baggage could clear the decks and help you to know what actions are in your best interests.
- 

Leo
July 24th - August 23rd
If your social life has been less than satisfactory lately, then Mars's rewind phase might have encouraged you to jettison associations that aren't contributing anything.
- 

Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd
A significant shift takes place next week, making it easier to get ahead with your plans. If the last two months or so have been dispiriting, your affairs will soon show more promise.
- 

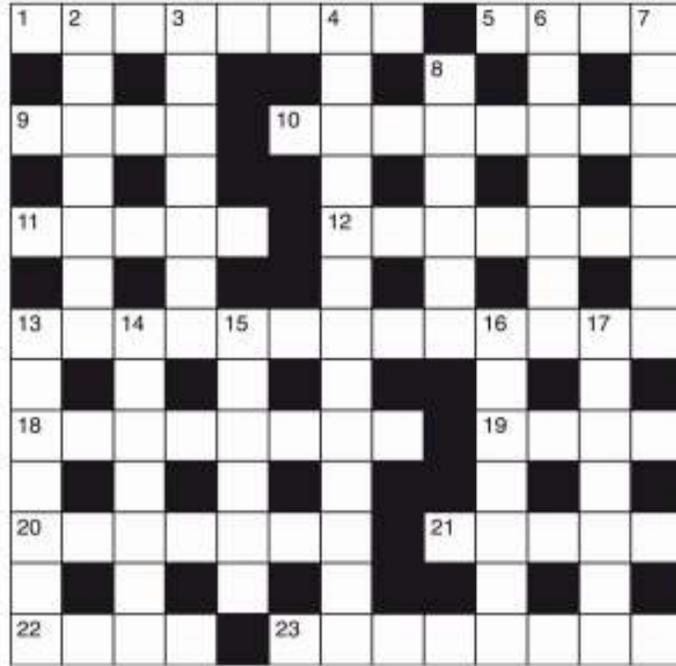
Libra
September 24th - October 23rd
With passionate Mars pushing forward in your sector of adventure and study, it's time to set sail and take on a challenge or opportunity.
- 

Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd
With sassy Mars ending its retro phase and turning direct next week, you may feel a sense of relief as matters associated with deeply private issues begin to show more promise, Scorpio..
- 

Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st
If a relationship has been limping along recently, then Mars's forward motion next week could infuse new energy into this bond although it may not be immediately.
- 

Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th
The good news for next week is that Mars finally moves forward after its retro phase, which means the tide is turning, and soon you'll be firing on all cylinders again.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11548



Across

- 1 Cadets OK building fortification (8)
- 5 A trial of brute strength (4)
- 9 Extent of a square as measured (4)
- 10 Duel a bit, 'Ai subject to Customs charges! (8)
- 11 Cheerful because of incidental benefits from job? (5)
- 12 Changes in bill are generous (7)
- 13 Additional problems could have comical points (13)
- 18 Leaving out nothing at the embassy (8)
- 19 The way some children are brought up at home (4)
- 20 Monkeys bring benefits to graduates (7)
- 21 Hard work could be a waste (5)
- 22 University stunts in the papers? (4)
- 23 Naval commanders want arms laid out (8)

Down

- 2 Trooped out to see electric ray (7)
- 3 Highly praise breakdown? (5,2)
- 4 With two bars to the tee? (6-7)
- 6 Ban could make mob rage (7)
- 7 Increases threefold for top singers (7)
- 8 Choice morsel the bird nibbled? (6)
- 13 Lever of which the legal profession can boast? (7)
- 14 Corresponding container (7)
- 15 Learning situation where there's not so much activity (6)
- 16 Now ripe to become the ruling party? (2,5)
- 17 Unusual bent shown by everybody succeeding in this game (7)

SUDOKU BY HANZO

Instructions
Complete the square making sure that every row of nine numbers includes all digits from 1 to 9, every column includes all digits from 1 to 9 and every 3 by 3 subsection includes all digits from 1 to 9

3			2			8		
	4				6	7		
	8			7			1	
		3		5			6	1
		8	4		2			
		7				2		
	6	5		9				7
		9			8	5		
					1		8	

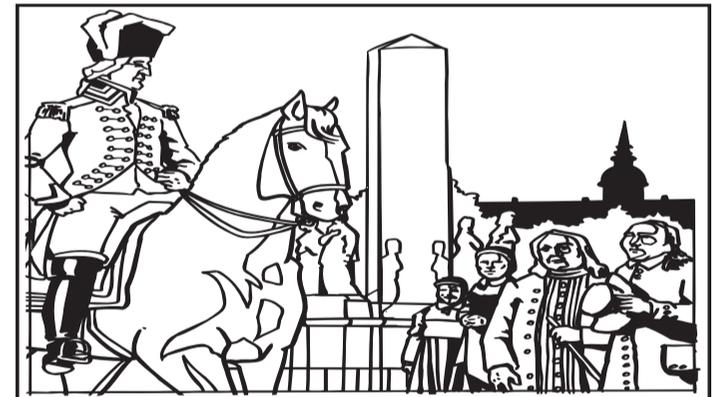
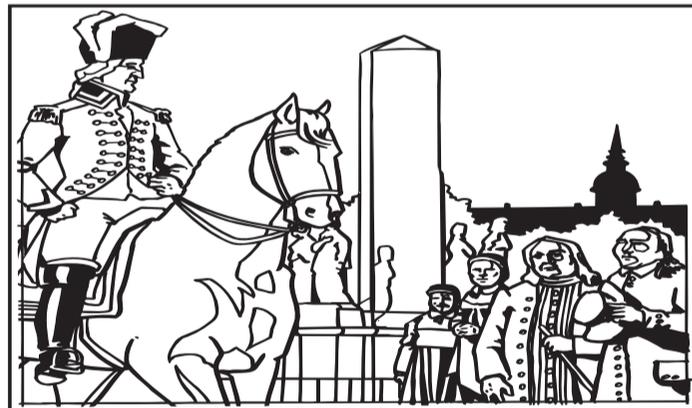
THE WORDPUZZLER

D	E	A	L	W	A	S	P	O	R
E	G	R	I	O	M	P	O	L	E
L	I	M	T	O	P	O	U	N	D
S	C	I	R	C	A	D	N	O	I
T	U	S	E	H	G	G	C	W	T
I	M	S	N	E	E	R	E	N	O
P	I	A	T	R	D	O	N	F	R
R	S	I	A	M	I	P	D	A	I
A	L	N	S	I	Q	U	A	R	T
W	A	T	T	R	O	S	L	E	S

Can you identify the words from their abbreviations listed below?

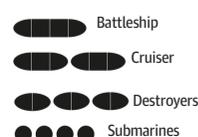
- 1. P
- 2. Qt
- 3. Oz
- 4. C
- 5. W
- 6. Ed
- 7. L
- 8. Op
- 9. Lb
- 10. St

THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



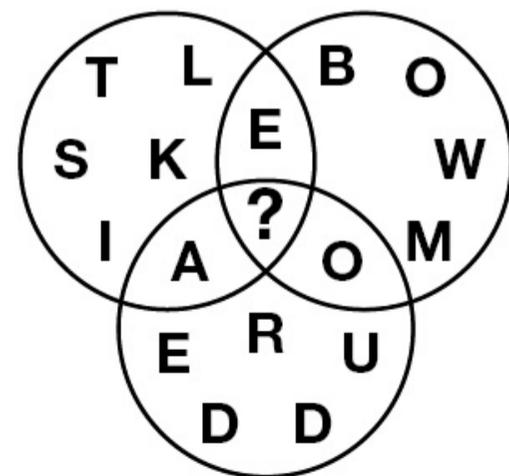
BATTLESHIPS

Instructions Find where the fleet of ships (1 battleship, 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 4 submarines) are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some have been filled in to start you off.



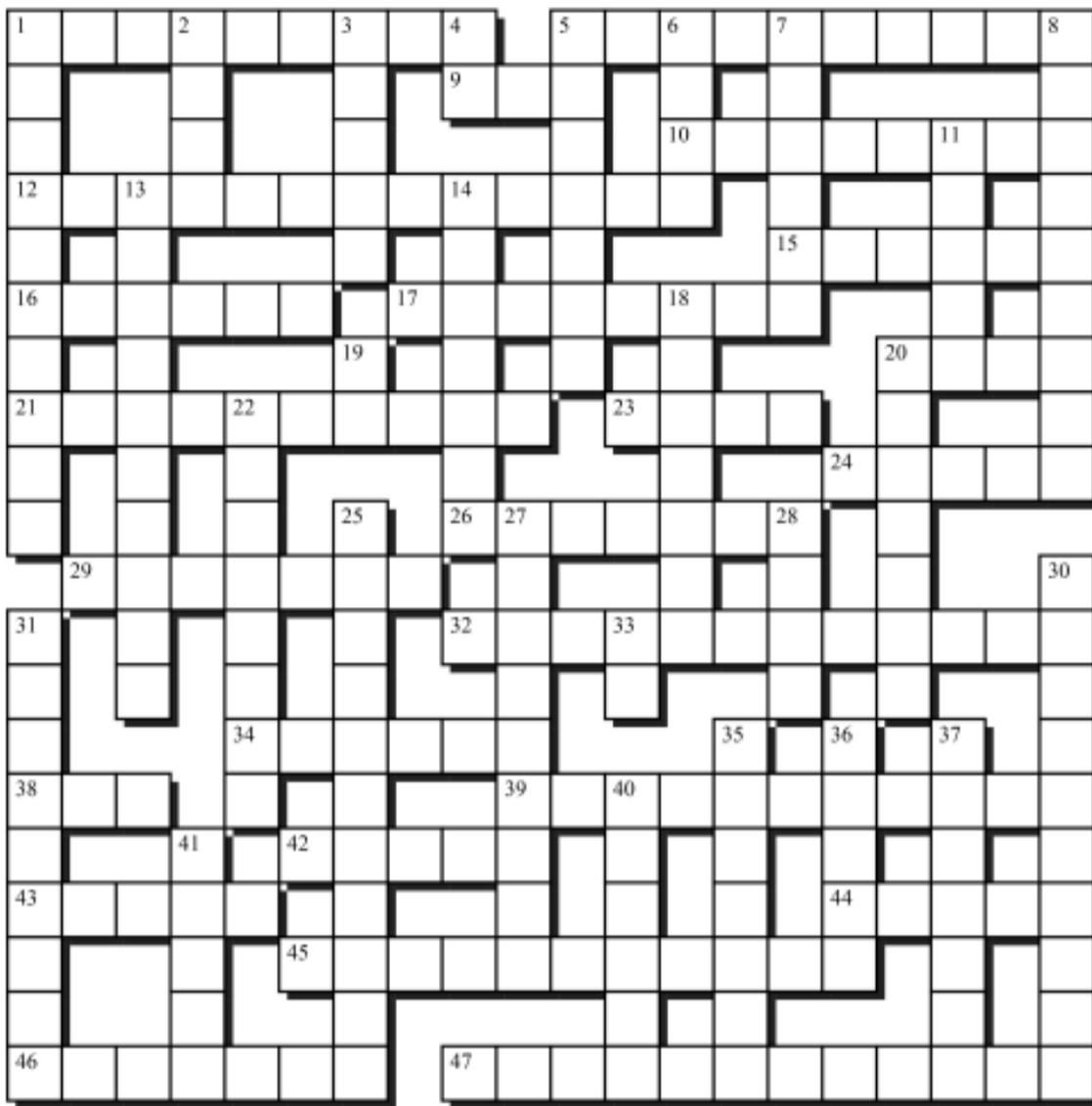
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
A											3
B								■			4
C											0
D											2
E	■						■				3
F											1
G											0
H									■		3
I											4
J											0
	2	3	2	2	1	1	3	2	3	1	

CIRCLEGRAM



Instructions
Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters in each circle can be arranged to form words, names or terms on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?

LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD



Across

- 1) Rescued (m) (9)
- 5) They build (10)
- 9) To be (3)
- 10) Dry dock (8)
- 12) Especially (13)
- 15) I chose (6)
- 16) Funnel (6)
- 17) Reports (8)
- 20) I gave birth (4)
- 21) To classify (10)
- 23) Tall (m) (4)
- 24) Bone (5)
- 26) Eighty (7)
- 29) Prices (7)
- 32) Researcher (12)
- 34) I resigned (6)
- 38) It was (3)
- 39) Explanation (11)
- 42) Waves (5)
- 43) Oyster (5)
- 44) Sheep (5)
- 45) Springs (11)
- 46) Located (m) (7)
- 47) Settlement (12)

Down

- 1) Reference (10)
- 2) She eats (4)
- 3) They walk (5)
- 4) You (pl) (2)
- 5) Skulls (7)
- 6) Warehouse (4)
- 7) Towers (6)
- 8) Neolithic (9)
- 11) Era (5)
- 13) Settlers (10)
- 14) Term of office (7)
- 18) Mills (7)
- 19) Yes (2)
- 20) Evidence (7)
- 22) Started (f) (8)
- 25) Documented (m) (11)
- 27) They confess (9)
- 28) Celery (4)
- 30) Starting up (10)
- 31) Numerous (m) (9)
- 33) It is (2)
- 35) Vigil (7)
- 36) Ducks (5)
- 37) Baby's bottle (7)
- 40) They ordered (6)
- 41) Tribe (5)

QUIZ

In which European city would you find the Rijksmuseum?

- 1. Amsterdam 2. Reykjavik
- 3. Helsinki 4. Verviers



What is the capital of New Zealand?

- 1. Auckland 2. Christchurch.
- 3. Queenstown 4. Wellington

Street artist Banksy is originally associated with which British city?

- 1. London 2. Manchester
- 3. Bristol 4. Birmingham

THE SUR IN ENGLISH COLUMN

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ANSWERS

Quiz answers

Answer: Amsterdam
The national museum of the Netherlands dedicated to Dutch arts and history and has over 1 million artworks in its collection.
Answer: Wellington
Of interest: Wellington has been the capital of New Zealand since 1865. New Zealand's first capital city was Old Russell (Okaito) in 1840-41.
Answer: Bristol
Of interest: Banksy's work grew out of the Bristol underground scene, which involved collaborations between artists and musicians. His works have appeared all over the world, and sold for millions at various auctions.

Circlegam

The letter represented by the question mark is R. Talisker, Bournemouth, all Scottish whiskies.

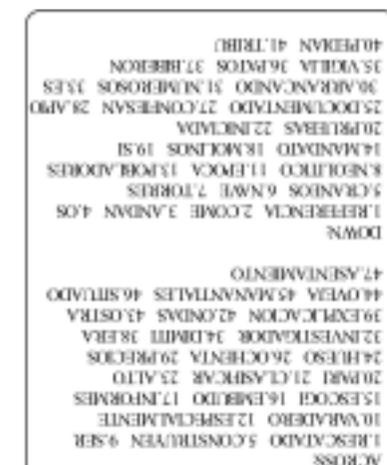
Cryptic Crossword

Solutions: Across: 1 Stockade; 5 Test; 9 Area; 10 Durable; 11 Picky; 12 Liberal; 13 Complications; 18 Omissions; 19 Path; 20 Baboons; 21 Sweet; 22 Page; 23 Admirer. Down: 2 Torpedo; 3 Crack up; 4 Double-crossed; 6 Embargo; 7 Treble; 8 Tilt; 13 Crowbar; 14 Matrigel; 15 Lesson; 16 In power; 17 Nettle.

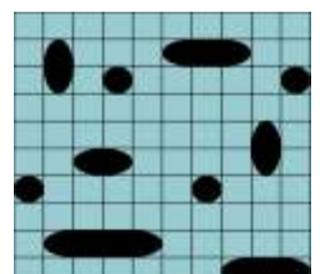
Wordpuzler solution



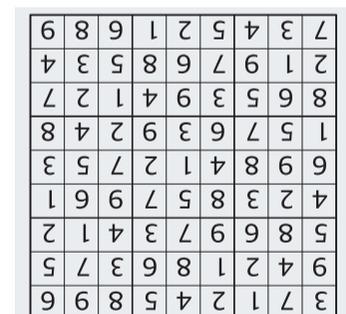
Language Crossword



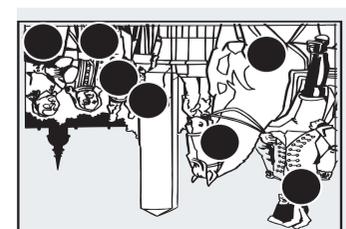
Battleships



Sudoku solution



The seven differences



He was born to the sound of bells ringing in the New Year, and was the first baby to arrive in Malaga province in 2023. Little Aarón came into the world at the Materno Infantil hospital in Malaga city at 12.01am, weighing 4.2 kilos. His parents, Érika Anaya, 17, and Omar Bravo, 19, who met at school five years ago, said they were “over the moon” with joy.

Aarón was not the only baby in Andalucía to be born one minute after midnight on 1 January: little Alejandro came into the world at exactly the same time at the Materno-Universitario hospital in Torrecárdenas, Almería.

Costa del Sol

Meanwhile the Costa del Sol hospital in Marbella did not have much longer to wait for its first arrival of the New Year.

While the streets were still packed with people celebrating, Miriam and Aimar welcomed their fourth child, Sulaiman. The boy was born at 12.54am, weighing 3.54 kilos and measuring 50 centimetres.

An emotional Aimar dedicated a song to the midwives, doctors and nurses who were on duty that night, which he posted on social media. The flamenco-style song has since gone viral.

Song of gratitude

“For all the doctors, nurses and midwives who, whatever day it is, are on the frontline,” he sings after saying: “Very good morning, families. I wish you a happy New Year, health, love and happiness. And I want you to give a big round of applause from your homes to these ladies and gentlemen who, on the 31st, while



Érika and Omar pose with baby Aarón, and staff at the Malaga maternity hospital. **sur**

Born as the clock chimed in the New Year

Aarón and Sulaiman. These are the names of the first babies to be born in Malaga province in 2023, the first at barely one minute past midnight

MATÍAS STUBER
JOAQUINA DUEÑAS



▲ Proud parents Miriam and Aimar with baby Sulaiman and staff at the Costa del Sol hospital in Marbella. **sur**

you were out partying, have been here, bringing me my greatest gift of 2023, my baby Sulaiman.”

The father-of-four said he wanted to pay tribute to the health workers by bringing back the applause they received during the pandemic and remembering the work they do every day.

First in Spain

Despite being born at 12.01am, neither Aarón nor Alejandro was Spain's first baby of 2023. They were pipped at the post by Iratxe, whose birth was registered at exactly 12am at the Gregorio Marañón hospital in Madrid.

A daughter for Andrea and Daniel, Iratxe weighed in at 3.72 kilos.

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